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A TENTATIVE CATALOGUE OF BIBLICAL  
METAPHORS.<sup>1</sup>

ἔστι δὲ μέγα μὲν τὸ ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰρημένων προπόντως χρῆσθαι . . . πολλὸν δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι. μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν, εὐφύτας τε σημείων ἐστίν· τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὁμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστίν.

ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*, xxii.

I THINK it would repay his trouble if a real scholar were to write a good monograph upon Biblical metaphors. Such a scholar would first of all consider them from a purely literary point of view, showing their peculiar excellences and defects, and how far they obey or transgress the canons of metaphor drawn up in various ages, from Aristotle in the Rhetoric down to Messrs. Abbott and Seeley in our own day. The real scholar would then illustrate them from comparative literature, firstly from cognate religious writings such as the Babylonian and Assyrian hymns in which even a glance at Zimmern and Sayce is enough to show many a suggestive parallel; then from other branches of Oriental literature; and lastly, he would supply us with an adequate number of similar or contrasted metaphors from the literatures of Greece and Rome. And these parallels, as the most literary, most beautiful and most sympathetic of all, would also be the most profitable and interesting. This is what the real scholar would do, and, as I said before, it would, I think, be well worth doing. Bishop Lowth, in his lectures on "Hebrew Poetry," has some chapters on Metaphors, Similes, Comparisons and Personifications, treated somewhat in this way; but though the student of the history of Biblical interpretation will

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<sup>1</sup> A Lecture delivered at the Jews' College Literary Society, on May 24th, 1891.

find them quite worth reading, they will not supply the scholar with much raw material for his work.

It is just a little such material which I have put together here in a survey of the Biblical metaphors themselves, divided off into classes and categories. Towards the production of the desired monograph I hope that even this imperfect catalogue may be of use.

One has to remember that similes and metaphors, when consciously used, are mainly to be looked for and found in poetry. This is also the case in the Bible. There are, indeed, a few metaphors in the Pentateuch and the historical books, but the vast proportion are elsewhere. But with a single exception the poetical books of the Bible were not written as mere poetry, with no ulterior object beyond pleasure or artistic satisfaction. They are didactic or liturgical, and their metaphors and similes were probably in very few cases only elaborated with a deliberate eye to artistic effect. The single exception is, of course, the love poem of Canticles. In Canticles the metaphors are mainly confined to elaborate comparisons of the hero and heroine, and of every portion of their bodies, with various animate and inanimate objects of nature. Some of these are of exquisite propriety, some at once daring and yet apposite. Has the glory of a woman's beauty and the overwhelming impression which it produces ever been more nobly expressed than in the famous lines, "Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" (vi. 10). It would be interesting to compare the images of the Canticles with the images in the love poetry of Greece and Persia, and to trace their possible influence in our own great specimens of erotic poetry, such as the "Venus and Adonis" and the "Britain's Ida." But as the Canticles lie quite outside the remaining mass of Biblical poetry, I do not propose to consider them further in the present essay.

In the Psalms metaphorical language is mainly employed to illustrate and impress the leading religious conceptions.

Thus we have a number of metaphors about God and his dealings with Israel and the nations. Divine punishment and beneficence, prosperity and sin, Israel's glory and its enemies' discomfiture, form the standing subjects which it is sought to illustrate by metaphor. Of the prophets the Book of Isaiah provides by far the largest number, and by far the best. Jeremiah's literary style is not one of his strongest points, while Ezekiel, in his metaphors as in his descriptions generally, shows exaggeration and a heavy hand. In the Book of Proverbs metaphors to illustrate general ethical ideas are naturally appropriate; but there are surprisingly few of them, except in the 25th, 26th, and 27th chapters. Among a good many metaphors in Job are some of the most striking, elaborate and poetical in all Scripture.

There are comparatively few fully worked-out similes in the Hebrew Bible. This is due, I suppose, to the fact that the similes are not used as ornament, but as illustration. In compensation for this curtness we often find a number of short, pregnant similes used one after another to illustrate the same idea.

Thus, to take an example from Hosea: the prophet declares that the sinners among his people shall disappear in the Judgment, "like a morning cloud, or like the dew which early passes away, or as the chaff which is driven with a whirlwind out of the threshing floor, or as the smoke out of the lattice" (xiii. 3). Even the worked-out similes are far shorter than the similes of Homer for, "as a rule, they but tersely mark the point of comparison, and dispense with non-essential details."<sup>1</sup> Very frequently, indeed, the simile is altogether dispensed with, and we get instead the true metaphor, without comparison or middle term.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jebb's *Homer*, p. 29; and cf. Lowth, *Lectures* (Eng. Tr.), vol. I., p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> The prevalence of metaphor may on Aristotelian principles be looked upon as a merit. For the simile (*εἰκὼν*) which is a *μεταφορὰ διαφέρουσα*

Bishop Lowth has several acute observations about Biblical similes and metaphors. Their excellence, he thinks, is shown in their purity, their directness and their perspicuity. The last quality is partly due to the fact that the material of which the metaphors are made is taken mainly from common and familiar objects. The new idea is illustrated by well-known analogies. Secondly, there is a consistency in the Biblical use of metaphors, a *certa fere ratio et via*, the maintenance of a *recepta quaedam consuetudinis norma*, as he expresses it, which impresses them upon the imagination. Both observations are true. Many metaphors in the Bible recur at the proper places with almost wearisome iteration. Of these I shall naturally cite only a few of the best examples in each case. Lowth is equally accurate in the statement that the metaphors are almost invariably taken from common and familiar objects. As in Homer, so in the Bible, "subjective imagery, from sensation or thought, is extremely rare" (Jebb, *Ibid.*, p. 31). We should not now, however, be at equal pains with the dear, pedantic, pompous old bishop to prove the propriety of metaphors from the common world of every day.

The writers of the Bible and its first hearers or readers lived a much more out-of-door life than we do, and were thus more familiar with the simpler processes of nature. Town life suggested few metaphors to them. By far the greater bulk come from nature, from the animate and inanimate world, as well as from agricultural and pastoral life. I propose now to begin my survey or index with instances of metaphors from the animal kingdom, from beasts and birds and insects.

Let us take the wild beasts first. Among these, both in the Bible and in Homer, the lion occupies the foremost place. Lions of more than one variety, during the Biblical period, "had their lairs in the forests which have perished

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προθέσει ἐς ἥττον ἡδύ, ὅτι μακροτέρως· καὶ οὐ λέγει ὡς τοῦτο ἐκείνο· οὐκ οὐδὲ ζητεῖ τοῦτο ἢ ψυχῇ. (*Rhet.* III. 10, § 3.)

with them, and in the cane brakes of the Jordan.”<sup>1</sup> The lion may be either the emblem of irresistible hostility, or of proud and fearless confidence. Thus, Israel’s enemies are frequently compared to a lion, and their war-shout to its roaring. So in Isaiah, of the Assyrian, “A roar has he like that of the lioness; he roareth like the young lions, growling and catching the prey, and carrying it away safe, so that none can rescue” (v. 29). The Psalmist’s enemy “lurks in a hiding-place as a lion in his lair” (x. 9). One metaphor alludes to the family life of the royal beast, “who tears in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangles for his lionesses, and fills his holes with prey, and his dens with ruin” (Nahum ii. 11-13). God himself is compared to a lion, both as Israel’s enemy (Hosea v. 14) and as his protector (*e.g.*, Hosea xi. 10; Isaiah xxxi. 4). In what has been called by Delitzsch the most Homeric simile in Isaiah, we are told how, “Like as the lion with the young lion growls over his prey, against whom there is called a troop of shepherds, at their cry he is not dismayed, and at their noise he is not cast down; so shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Zion” (xxx. 4). Conflicts between shepherds and lions were clearly frequent. Thus, the few to be saved from the judgment are compared to the issue of a fight when “the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear” (Amos iii. 12).

From another point of view Israel or its princes are compared to lions. Judah is described as a lion in the blessing of Jacob, Gad and Dan in the blessing of Moses. In one of his formal lamentations, Ezekiel typifies the land or people of Judah under the figure of a lioness, while the hapless kings, Joahaz and Jehoiachin, are her whelps. In Balaam’s “parables” Israel is the lion who couches at his ease, and whom none can stir up against his will (Numbers xxiii. 24, xxiv. 9), while Micah predicts that the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples,

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<sup>1</sup> Tristram’s *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 116.

"as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver" (v. 7).

Other wild beasts which are used for similes are the bear, the leopard and the wolf, jackals and foxes, the antelope, the wild ass and "wild ox." The she bear, bereft of her whelps, is a familiar image of terror, yet a fool in his folly is an even worse thing to meet, according to the proverb (Prov. xvii. 12; cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 8). Enemies are often compared to these creatures.<sup>1</sup> Their peculiar cry supplies the motive of the comparison in the case of the bear and the jackal (Is. lix. 11; Micah i. 8). To the fox, who burrows in ruins, Ezekiel compares the false prophets who widen the social breach (xiii. 4). The sons of Jerusalem who lie in a swoon, fainting, at the corners of the street, are likened to the antelope, who, after vain struggles, lies exhausted and motionless within the hunter's net (Is. li. 20). One of the most famous metaphors in the Psalter is the comparison of the soul thirsting for nearer communion with God to the hind which pants for the water brooks (xlii. 2).

Turning now to more domestic animals, we find the bull, which, after long enjoyment of free grazing in the forests or plains, often became wild (Tristram, p. 71), used to typify an enemy, just like the lion or the bear (Ps. xxii. 13; lxviii. 31). So, again, Israel is the bull. Thus in the Song of Moses, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." Balak fears that Israel may "lick up all which is round about as the ox licketh up the grass of the field" (Num. xxii. 4). Then we have a few references to the whip-training of the bullock for the yoke, and to the obstinacy of the heifer (Jer. xxxi. 18; Hosea iv. 16). The rejoicing of those who are saved after the Judgment is compared by Malachi to the gambolling of the calves who have been kept in their stalls through the winter and

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Hosea xiii. 8; Jer. v. 6; Ez. xxii. 27; Is. lvi. 9.

are let out into the fields with the spring (Mal. iii. 20). Isaiah's famous contrast, "The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Is. i. 3), is not least appreciated by those who have seen the cattle brought down at close of day from the Swiss mountains and have watched how, as they pass through the long village street, they turn in, each one of them, at the proper door. The comparison of Israel to a flock may be reserved for another connection.

There are but few metaphors from the horse. This is but natural, seeing that cattle and not horses were used for agriculture, while cavalry was always more characteristic of foreign than of native armaments. The impetuous hurry with which the people of Jerusalem pursue their ways of wickedness is compared by Jeremiah (viii. 6 ; see Cheyne) to the war-horse rushing into the battle. The flight of locusts is compared to the onset of cavalry in Joel (ii. 4). The surefootedness of the horse is apparently the motive of the simile that God led the Israelites through the Red Sea's bed like horses through the wilderness, without stumbling (Is. lxiii. 13, 14). From a religious point of view the horse and mule supply an effective metaphor to the Psalmist, "Be ye not as the horse or mule which has no understanding ; with bit and bridle, his harness, must he be tamed, else he will not come nigh unto thee" (xxxii. 9).

It seems strange to us Westerns that the dog should only furnish images of hostility, opprobrium or contempt. The homes of our Biblical ancestors must have been the poorer and the sadder for the absence of both the dog and the cat. The cat is not mentioned in the Bible at all, while the dog, like the wild dogs of the East to-day, bears no resemblance to the dogs of our European homes. Even Homer, in spite of Argos, alludes mainly to the dog as a beast to hunt, and not as a friend to live with. The dogs that "fawn about their lord when he comes from the feast, for he always brings them the fragments that soothe their



mood" (*Od.*, X. 216), have clearly not reached a high level of canine development; one prefers the pure naturalism of the she-dog who "paces round her tender puppies growling, when she spies a man she knows not, and is eager to assail him" (*Od.*, XX. 14). In the twenty-second Psalm, dogs, like bulls and lions, typify the wicked and the hostile, and the snarl and greed of the dog are elsewhere alluded to (cf. Isaiah lvi. 10, 11; Ps. lix. 7). A dog certainly objects to strangers meddling with his ears; but it is really mournful that the Proverbs only bring in the dog to refer to this and to one other more unpalatable quality (xxvi. 11, 17). In Job, indeed, the shepherd dog is mentioned once, but Dr. Tristram tells us that even in this capacity dogs were not used as with us for driving and seeking out the flocks, but only "for protecting them from the attacks of wolves and jackals by night" (p. 78).

Many metaphors are made up from the habits of birds, although, as Dr. Tristram points out, there are strangely few allusions to their singing (cp. Ps. civ. 12; Koh. xii. 4; Cant. ii. 12). Very frequent is the reference to their capture by the fowler's snare, which, with the net, whether for beasts or birds, is a regular and standing metaphor for hidden danger and secret attack.<sup>1</sup> A Psalmist speaks of the snare breaking: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (cxxiv. 7). Striking, though not consistently worked out, is the metaphor from bird-nesting in Isaiah of the Assyrian king: "My hand reached as a nest the riches of peoples, and as a man gathereth forsaken eggs, I have gathered all the earth, and there was none that fluttered a wing, nor opened a beak, nor chirped" (x. 14). Jehovah, to Israel's foes as a lion undaunted by the shepherd's cry, is to Jerusalem as a bird, who keeps circling round and round her nest when danger is in sight.

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Ps. xxv. 15; xxxi. 5; xxxv. 8; cxi. 6; Isaiah viii. 14; Ezek. xii. 13; Job xviii. 8, 9. Sometimes the net is God's.

"Like birds hovering, so shall the Lord of Hosts shelter Jerusalem, sheltering and delivering, passing over and rescuing" (xxx. 5).

Not less effective is the simile in the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 11) of the eagle teaching the eaglet to fly. "As an eagle stirs up his young ones to fly, and flutters over them, and then (when they are weary) spreads forth his wings and bears them upon his pinions (home), so did Jehovah bear his people to their promised inheritance." The Hebrew original is here illustrative of the usual desire of the Biblical authors not to waste time over their metaphors, but to come at once to the point. In this case the poet has actually transferred the latter portion of the simile to the object (here, God) with which the eagle is compared. The above inaccurate translation (as in the Authorised Version) makes the eagle the subject of all the details of the picture, whereas in the Hebrew the effect is somewhat marred by the fact that the spreading out of the wings and the bearing upon the pinions are applied to God instead of to the bird. That birds of prey train their young to flight and carry them when weary is quite correct: it is again alluded to in Exodus, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, when I bore you as on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself" (xix. 4). On the other hand, the *sheltering* wings of female birds, under which their young can find refuge and warmth, supply a frequent figure to the Psalmists.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting instance of a myth leaving behind it a metaphorical use of language is supplied by the second verse of Genesis i. Here we are told that the Spirit of God brooded or hovered over the face of the waters; now the same word is used in the Song of Moses for the eagle hovering over its young, and there seems little doubt that the conception has been, so to speak, watered down or rather

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Ps. xxxvi. 7 ; lvii. 21 ; xi. 5 ; lxiii. 8 ; xci. 4. Ruth ii. 12. Cp. Æsch. *Eumenides*, 1002 : Παλλάδος δ' ὑπὸ πτεροῖς ὄντας ἄζεται πατήρ.

spiritualised up, from the old myth of the World Egg. That God's spirit was compared with a bird we know from the stories in the Gospels.

Isaiah had contrasted the spiritual denseness of Israel with the instinctive intelligence of the ass and the ox. Jeremiah (viii. 7) makes the same contrast with birds. "The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times (that is her period of migration), and the turtle and the swift and the crane observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the religion of Yahveh."

We may now collect the curt allusions to particular birds scattered through the Biblical metaphors. The eagle claims the first place. Unfortunately, however, the Hebrew *Nesher*, which we ordinarily translate eagle, is not an eagle at all, but a particular kind of vulture, known according to Dr. Tristram as the Griffon or great vulture, in Latin as the *Gyps fulvus*. This creature's head is bald, a quality which is referred to by Micah, whereas the eagle's head is well covered with feathers. It is, however, not to be expected that we can give up "eagle" in our translations for a bird with the evil associations of the vulture.<sup>1</sup> Our eagle or vulture, whichever he be, supplies material for many comparisons which space forbids me to quote. Its swiftness is specially emphasised, and allusion is also made to its longevity and to its nests in the clefts of inaccessible rocks. Like the lion it typifies powerful kingdoms, such as Egypt and Assyria.<sup>2</sup>

If the joyous song of birds is not often alluded to, their mournful notes are frequently used to symbolise human lamentations. So with the ostrich, the crane, and the dove (Mic. i. 8; Is. xxxviii. 14; lix. 11). The last-named bird, in one or other of its numerous species, is a favourite with the Biblical poets. Israel is called God's turtledove, as opposed to the birds of prey its ene-

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<sup>1</sup> But compare Job xxxix. 30; Proverbs xxx. 17; Tristram, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 2 Sam. i. 23; Is. xl. 31; Jer. xlix. 16; Ob. 4; Micah i. 16; Job ix. 26; Ps. ciii. 5; Ezekiel xvii. 1-10.

mies. Hosea, however, compares Ephraim to a dove in a less flattering manner: Ephraim is like a silly dove without understanding; they avoid the hawk by falling into the net of the fowler (vii. 11, 12, see Cheyne). Elsewhere reference is made to the wild rock pigeon's precipitous dwelling-places: "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest across the precipice on the rock's mouth" (Jer. xlviii. 28). Compare in Homer when Artemis escapes from the chastisement of Hera: "And weeping, from before her the goddess fled like a dove that from before a falcon flieth to a hollow rock, a cleft—for she was not fated to be caught—thus Artemis fled weeping, and left her bow and arrows where they lay." (*Iliad*, XXI. 493.)

Before leaving the birds we must not forget the well-known simile in Jeremiah (xvii. 11) about the partridge. It rests upon some popular delusion, which has not been paralleled by industrious commentators from other literatures: "As a partridge gathers young which she has not brought forth, so is he that getteth riches unjustly." Dr. Tristram's explanation follows the Authorised Version's rendering, but, as Professor Cheyne points out, that rendering violates the Hebrew. The point of the comparison, however, does not seem to lie where Professor Cheyne puts it; it is not that "as the young birds soon leave the false mother, so unjustly acquired riches soon forsake their possessors"; it is merely the unjust acquisitions in either case which are compared together.<sup>1</sup>

Serpents are naturally the emblems of the wicked, and their poison is a type of sinfulness. Thus the Psalmist's enemies "have poison as the poison of a serpent; yea, as that of a deaf adder which stops her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, nay of the most cunning binder of spells" (lviii. 5, 6). Israel shall triumph even over foes

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<sup>1</sup> The supposed cruelty of the ostrich to her eggs supplies a simile in Lam. iv. 3. (Compare Job xxxix. 14-17.) The jackals are tenderer to their young.

like these: "Upon the lion and adder shalt thou tread; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot" (Ps. xci. 13; cf. cxi. 4; Jer. viii. 17). The collocation of wild beast with serpent was not unnatural; and the latter was, perhaps, even a worse foe than the former. Thus Amos likens the folly of those who from the midst of present distresses, desire the coming of God's dreadful day—who would fly from ills they have to woes they know not of—to the case of him who fleeing from a lion was met by a bear, or "went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him" (v. 19). II. Isaiah rather awkwardly combines the snake with the spider. The wicked "hatch vipers' eggs and weave spiders' webs: he that eateth of their eggs will die, and if one be crushed, it breaketh out into a viper" (lix. 5, 6; cf. Job viii. 14). Isaiah had already used the figure of the snake to symbolise the destructive power of Assyria (xiv. 29).

Besides beasts and birds and serpents, there are metaphors from insects. Locusts were only too familiar objects for supplying a metaphor of an enemy's speed, number or voracity. The figure is most effectively employed in Nahum, though one or two of the details are obscure and disputed: "The fire shall devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the locust, though thou make thyself many as the locust or the grasshopper. (Thus the locust is used now for the enemy and then for the Ninevites.) Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven; but yet the locust has spread out its wings and has flown away. (Here the merchants are the locusts.) Thy princes are as grasshoppers and thy marshals as locusts, which encamp upon the walls in the cool of day, but when the sun arises they flee away, and their place is not known where they are" (Nahum iii. 15-17). I need only allude to the famous description of the locust in Joel, which people now no longer perversely describe as an elaborate metaphor for the attack of a human enemy. Besides

the locust and the scorpion (Ezek. ii. 6), we have the moth, the emblem of mutability and rottenness (thus God will be unto Ephraim as a moth, Hosea v. 12), the worm, the emblem of lowliness and contempt, as well as the fly, the slug and the bee.<sup>1</sup> Says the Preacher: "Poisonous flies make the perfumer's oil to stink and ferment; even so is a little folly weightier than wisdom and honour" (x. 1); of which the meaning is that a small amount of evil outweighs and stultifies a large amount of good. The simile from the slug is very odd. Apparently the popular notion was that a slug gradually melted away into slime; and so the Psalmist amiably prays that his enemies may disappear as a slug which melts as it moves along.<sup>2</sup> The bee, besides one allusion in the Psalter, forms a fine figure in Isaiah (vii. 18, 19). Egypt is symbolised by a fly, and Assyria by a bee, both images appropriate to the particular countries. On the day of judgment "Yahveh will hiss to the flies at the end of the Nile-arms of Egypt, and to the bees in the land of Assyria, and they shall all of them come and settle on the steeply-walled valleys of the torrents, and on the rents of the cliffs, and on all the thorn-bushes, and on all the pastures." It is curious how metaphor and statement are here fused together. The predicted joint invasion of the Egyptian and Assyrian armies—a prediction which, by the way, was not fulfilled—is not merely likened to a swarm of bees and flies: Assyria *is* the bee, and Egypt *is* the fly, while the invasion is described in terms suitable, not to the human armies, but to the insect hosts. Homer never contracts his similes in this way; but he also has a simile from bees, and it is worth while setting it side by side with Isaiah's: "Even as when the tribes of thronging bees issue from some hollow rock, ever in fresh procession, and fly clustering among the flowers of spring, and, some on this hand and some on that, fly thick, even so, from ships and boats before the low

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Ps. xxxix. 12; Is. i. 9; Ps. xxii. 7; cxviii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lviii. 9. Cp. Pliny's *Natural History*, ix. 51.

beach, marched forth the many tribes (of the achaians) by companies to the place of Assembly." (*Iliad*, II. 87.)

If we pass now to inanimate nature, we find that a large number of standing or customary metaphors are drawn from the elemental forces of water, wind, and fire. Water in all its forms is a constantly recurring image; but the billows of the sea are less frequently in the minds of the Biblical writers than the billows of Jordan and the torrents of swollen mountain streams.

To begin with, great waters are the symbol of calamity and Divine punishment.<sup>1</sup> Isaiah, as usual, can show the noblest examples and the greatest variety of application. How fine is the contrast between the waters of Shiloah in Jerusalem, which symbolise the calm and gracious rule of God realised by faith, and the waters of the proud Euphrates, which symbolise the armies of Assyria! "Forasmuch as this people has rejected the waters of Shiloah, which flow softly, . . . therefore behold the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river, mighty and great; and it shall mount over all its channels and go over all its banks, and shall sweep along into Judah, shall overflow and pass over, reaching even to the neck; and the stretching out of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land" (viii. 6-8). Here it is curious to note how the metaphor of the river passes over at the end into a metaphor from a bird of prey. So, in a later chapter, Isaiah uses the strange compound of a "flooding scourge" (xxviii. 15). We have heard the battle-cry of the enemy compared to the lion's roar: it is also appropriately likened to the roaring waves: "Ah! the tumult of many peoples, like the tumult of the seas they are tumultuous; and the uproar of nations, like the roaring of mighty waters they roar" (xvii. 12-14). So in Homer: "And as when at the mouth of some heaven-born river

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<sup>1</sup> A sea of troubles is a Greek metaphor also. Cp. *Æsch.*, *Prom. Vinc.* 476 has πῆλαγος ἀτηρὰς δόης.

a mighty wave roars against the stream, and arouses the high cliffs' echo as the salt sea bellows on the beach, so loud was the cry wherewith the Trojans came." (*Iliad* XVII. 263.) The powers of earth hostile to Israel and Israel's God are continually symbolised as waters. In the Psalms it is curious to note how this symbolism is, as it were, used by the way. There is often no direct simile; it is only pure personification and metaphor, and several passages make sense even without the symbolism. So in the ninety-third Psalm. On the face of it, it appears to be a hymn of the Divine rule over nature, and such a meaning is not excluded, but the indirect reference to the nations was probably more prominent in the writer's mind. "The streams have lifted up, O Yahveh, the streams have lifted up their voice; the streams lift up their roaring. Than the voices of many waters, mighty waters, breakers of the sea, more mighty is Yahveh on high."<sup>1</sup> A good example of the water metaphor meaning calamity is the opening of the sixty-ninth Psalm: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even to the soul. I am sunk in the mire of a gulf where there is no standing; I am come into watery depths, where the tide overwhelms me." Here we get swamps as well as water, and the two are often combined. Professor Cheyne, after his experiences in Palestine, says that the imagery becomes intensely vivid in the light of travel. I do not like to omit the fine passage in the forty-second Psalm: "Flood calls unto flood at the sound of thy cataracts; all thy breakers and billows have gone over me." And one of the noblest and truest sayings of the whole Bible makes use of the same standing metaphor: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (Cant. viii. 7).

We also find the great volume of a sea or a river's waters used metaphorically for other purposes. There is

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ps. lxx. 7, 8, and Cheyne's *Notes*.



Amos' passionate demand (v. 24): "Let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a perpetual flowing stream." With which we may compare: "Then would thy peace have been as the river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Is. xlvi. 18; cf. lxvi. 12). Not to be forgotten, also, is the comparison between the fulness of the knowledge of God in the Messianic age with the waters, which in their measureless abundance cover the bottom of the sea (Is. xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14). Here may be mentioned too the similes from the sand of the sea-shore, which is sometimes used to typify the prospective numbers of Israel.<sup>1</sup> A more striking image is that of the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, where the Divine thoughts are said to outnumber the sand. Job in one passage employs it as a symbol of weight: "If his griefs were weighed in the balance they would be found to be heavier than the sand of the sea" (vi. 3). Two other applications of the water metaphor may here be added. One is from Isaiah lvii. 20: "The ungodly are like the sea that is tost up; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and mud." The other is from Hosea x. 7: "Samaria's king shall disappear as a chip of wood upon the water's face"; where Professor Cheyne has pointed out that this true rendering contains a figure even more appropriate (in its fine contrast between the helpless fragment of wood and the irresistible power of the current) than the Authorised Version's translation, "as the foam upon the water."<sup>2</sup>

This metaphor from Hosea leads us naturally on to a few others connected with the flow of streams and rivers.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hosea ii. 1; Gen. xxxii. 12; Ps. lxxviii. 27. So with the dust of the earth; Gen. xiii. 16. We get the sand in *Iliad* II. 800, and sand and dust together, *Iliad* IX. 385. The last passage is cited by Aristotle as an example of an hyperbole, a form of metaphor which he regards as having a juvenile character, signifying vehemence, and chiefly used in anger. (*Rhet.* III. 2. § 16.)

<sup>2</sup> Another simile from water is in Job xiv. 19. "The waters wear the stones; the overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth; even so thou destroyest the hope of man."

The ceaseless flood of tears has often, I suppose, in all literatures, been likened to the flow of a river; so in Lamentations, "Utter thy cry unto the Lord, O virgin daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a torrent, day and night" (Lam. ii. 18, Bickell), with which we may compare Jeremiah's outburst, "O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears" (viii. 23). One of the few elaborate similes in Scripture deals with the torrents of winter, which dry up in the heat of summer. It is a simile noticed by Lowth as combining all the qualifications of a good comparison, vivid illustration, elegance, beauty, and what not. The wealth of detail in it is quite Homeric. Job, reproaching his friends, declares, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a torrent, as the channel of torrents which pass away; which (in the spring) are dark by reason of the (melted) ice, and in which the snow is hidden; at the time when they feel the glow, they vanish; when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place. The paths of their ways become crooked, they dissolve into nothing and disappear. The caravans of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba hoped for them; they were abashed because they had been confident; when they came thither they were ashamed" (Job vi. 15-20). In two passages in the Book of Isaiah God is compared to a stream. Indeed, there are few objects in nature at all used for metaphors, to which, in one or other of his manifestations, the Deity is not compared. In the fifty-ninth chapter the Name of Yahveh is represented as coming to judgment "like a narrowed stream which the wrath of Yahveh driveth on;" and in the thirty-third chapter occurs the curious and difficult passage, "For there (in Jerusalem) shall be for us a mighty one, even Yahveh, in place of rivers and broad canals, and upon him (namely, upon Yahveh compared to a river) oared galley shall not go, neither shall majestic ship sail over it."<sup>1</sup> In the next verse but one (23), Jerusalem

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Psalm xlv. 5 and the commentators. The text is corrupt or incomplete.

is compared to a ship. In the day of danger "its ropes had become loose; they could not keep the mast firm in its stand, nor keep the sail spread out." A ship and streams suggest swimming. The Hebrew word for "swimming" is only twice found in the Bible, and on both occasions metaphorically. In the Psalms we have the exaggerated metaphor, "I am wearied with my groaning; every night I make my bed to swim, I melt away my couch with my tears" (vi. 7); and in Isaiah—that book of metaphors—we find the prophecy, "that Moab shall be trampled down in his place, as straw is trampled down in the water of a dung pit, and though Moab shall spread out his hands within it, as a swimmer spreadeth out his hands to swim, yet God shall press down his pride in spite of the artifices of his hands" (xxv. 10, 11).

From streams we pass to fountains. The most striking metaphorical use of them is the directly religious one, where the source or the contents of religious truth are symbolised as fountains. Through this Biblical usage, the water and well of life have become religious metaphors so common that their figurative character is well-nigh forgotten. To trace and determine their earliest employment would land us in critical difficulties. I should be inclined to suppose that Jeremiah is the author of this, as of one or two other striking religious conceptions. In his second chapter he charges Israel with a twofold sin: "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, hollow cisterns, that can hold no water" (ii. 13; xvii. 13; cf. *Abot* ii. 11). A later song-writer speaks of drawing water out of the wells of salvation (Isaiah xii. 3). More famous is the appeal of the prophet in Babylon, in which the metaphor from water passes into a more general metaphor from food: "Ho every one that thirsteth—come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, for that which is not money and for that which is not a price." Metaphors

from food and feasting, which we shall have to notice presently, were naturally combined with metaphors from water and drinking, as in a famous passage of the thirty-sixth Psalm—the high-water mark of the Psalter's religious mysticism: "How precious is thy loving kindness, O God! [in thee] do the children of men [put their trust]; in the shadow of thy wings they find refuge; they feast upon the fatness of thy house, and of the river of thy pleasures thou givest them their drink. For with thee is the fountain of life; by thy light do we see light." What excellent use is made of the metaphor from water in the fourth Gospel is familiar to all readers of that wonderful and fascinating book. "A well of life" is a familiar figure in Proverbs, to which are compared the mouth of the righteous, the teaching of the wise, and the fear of the Lord (x. 11; xiii. 14; xiv. 27). Other distichs use similar figures. Thus, "The words of a man's mouth are deep waters, a gushing brook, a well-spring of wisdom" (xviii. 4; cf. xx. 5). And again: "A righteous man yielding to the wicked is a troubled fountain, and a corrupted spring" (xxv. 26, See Del.). An isolated, but striking use of a cistern metaphor is that in Jer. vi. 7: "As a cistern keeps fresh her waters, so Jerusalem keeps fresh her wickedness." It is as natural to Jerusalem to be always providing a perpetual supply of wickedness, as for a cistern to be always providing a continual supply of cool, fresh water.<sup>1</sup>

From the waters upon the earth we pass on to those from the sky, to rain and snow and dew. Rain, as the cause of the earth's fertility, may fitly symbolise the cause of a nation's material or spiritual well-being. Thus, we have a king's favour compared to rain both in Psalms and Proverbs (*e.g.*, Psalm lxxii. 6; Prov. xvi. 15). The author of the Song of Moses hopes that his words may have an effect in their own province equally beneficial: "May my

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<sup>1</sup> A striking metaphor from artificial irrigations is that in Prov. xxi. 1: "A king's heart in Yahveh's hand is like to canals of water; he leads it whither he will."

doctrine drop as the rain, may my speech distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. xxxii. 2). Job declares that in his prosperous days men waited for his speech "as for the rain, and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain" (xxix. 23). Both God and God's Word are compared to rain. Thus, in Hosea, God's salvation "is certain as the dawn; he will come unto us as the heavy rain, as the latter rain which waters the earth" (vi. 3). Rain and snow are divine messengers or angels, and are so treated in the splendid simile of II. Isaiah: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and thither returneth not, except it has watered the earth, and made it bring forth and sprout, and given seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me empty" (lv. 10, 11).

A purely secular metaphor from rain is that in Proverbs xxvii. 15: "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." Dr. Geikie tells us that this is an excellent proverb. "A rain-soaked roof is only too well known in Palestine. In my own case, at Tiberias, the rain fell through the tent on me in great drops; there was no protection from it. Rest was impossible; the annoyance made the whole night miserable. Could there be a better comparison for a brawling woman than this perpetual splash, splash, when one wished, above all things, to be quiet?"<sup>1</sup>

There are four separate metaphors from snow in the Bible, all noticeable and all different. In the first we get snow as the whitest thing in nature, to typify innocence or purity: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall become white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall become as wool"<sup>2</sup> (Is. i. 18). With which may be compared the Psalmist's, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall

<sup>1</sup> Geikie, *The Holy Land and the Bible*, Vol. I., p. 53. The sense of Prov. xxvii. 16 is too doubtful to be here made use of.

<sup>2</sup> Snow is itself compared to wool, Ps. cxlvii. 16.

be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (li. 9). Colours are not elsewhere used to typify sin and purity. A totally different use of snow is met with in Proverbs. "As the cold of snow"—*i.e.*, as a draught (*e.g.*, of wine) made cool by snow—"in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him; for he refreshes the soul of his master" (xxv. 13). According to Delitzsch, snow is still stored up by the peasants of Menin, near Damascus, in a mountain cleft, and brought for sale in the summer to Damascus and the cities of the coast. A similar proverb runs, "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (xxv. 25). Snow in summer may make a lovely drink (and a Greek epigram of Asklepiades<sup>1</sup> agrees with the proverb just quoted); but from an agricultural point of view it is decidedly in the way. So we get the further proverb: "As snow in summer and rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool" (xxvi. 1). Lastly, in Job we find the following: "Drought and summer heat consume the snow waters, so Sheol consumes sinners" (xxiv. 19). Here the point of comparison is the sudden rapidity of disappearance.

Dew in Palestine is heavier in quantity and more important in its effects than in England. It is as a matter of fact not dew at all, but a sort of night-mist, the cause and nature of which can be read up in Geikie, Neill and the encyclopædias. However, I do not think that in our translations we need substitute "night-mist" for dew; it would be as bad as having to put the bald vulture or griffon for the eagle. Three qualities were noticed in the dew: its great amount, its speedy disappearance, its beneficent effect. Each quality supplies a metaphor. Thus for the first we have a phrase of Hushai's in his false advice to Absalom. He counselled the rebel son to collect the whole manhood of Israel in a host "as the sand that is by the sea for multitude," so that when they light upon David and his

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<sup>1</sup> Mackail, *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*, I. 2, p. 91.

fellows it may be "as the dew falleth on the ground" (2 Sam. xvii. 12). A metaphor from the transitoriness of dew has already been quoted. In another passage, also from Hosea, Israel's superficial and momentary repentance is aptly compared "to the morning cloud, and to the dew which early goeth away" (vi. 4). But most frequent is the metaphorical application of the dew's reviving and fertilising agency. God himself is compared to dew by Hosea, a writer to whom the dew was a peculiarly favourite metaphor: "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily" (xiv. 5). God's blessing, if Professor Cheyne be right, and not brothers' unity, is the subject of the famous double metaphor in Psalm cxxxiii., of which the first is "the fine oil upon the head, that descends upon the beard, even Aaron's, that descends upon the (upper) border of his vestures;" while the second is "the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion." Israel, as well as Israel's God, is compared to dew. The instance is in Micah, and illustrates the contrasted conjunction of two opposite metaphors which we have already noticed in the comparison of God to a roaring lion and to a protecting bird in successive verses of Isaiah. Here the conjunction is of the lion with the dew. The lion metaphor has been already quoted, and relates to the conquering and destructive operations of God's people in the opening of the Messianic age. It is, however—oddly enough—preceded by another metaphor in which Israel is compared to the dew. "And the remnant of Israel shall be in the midst of many peoples as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (v. 6). Hitzig rather prosaically explains this metaphor upon the analogy of the passage from Samuel: there is no real contrast between it and the lion metaphor, but only a variety of the same thought. Israel will fall upon the nations as suddenly and swiftly as the dew falls upon the ground. But it is more probable that the two metaphors were deliberately chosen to symbolise the double

aspect of Israel's work, the one redemptive and beneficial, the other violent and punitive. This interpretation is the more probable in view of the parallel antithesis in Proverbs (xix. 12), "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion, but his favour is as dew upon the grass." With this proverb, which seems couched courtier-like in mock heroics to us to-day, but was a grim reality when it was made, we may take leave of water metaphors and pass on to the clouds and to the winds.

There are, indeed, clouds and clouds. Gog the invader is likened to the storm-cloud by Ezekiel: "Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land" (Ezek. xxxviii. 9, 16; Jer. iv. 13; and cf. the grand simile, *Iliad* VI. 275). Lighter clouds pass quickly. So in Isaiah: "Who are these that fly as clouds, and as the doves to their lattices?" and in Job: "My welfare passeth away as a cloud;"<sup>1</sup> and the grander simile in one of his gloomiest speeches: "As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more" (Isaiah lx. 8; Job xxx. 15, vii. 9). Some clouds are deceptive, and give no rain when rain is longed for. Thus: "Whoso boasts with a deceitful gift is like clouds and wind, and yet no rain" (Prov. xxv. 14).

The wind, taken by itself, is metaphorically a type of judgment and calamity. Thus in Hosea: "For though Ephraim bear fruit among his brethren (a pun here upon the meaning of "Ephraim" and a metaphor of states or tribes with trees) an east wind shall come, a wind of Yahveh, coming up from the desert, and his spring (from which the tree derived its nourishment) shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up" (xiii. 15).

Here the destructive east wind symbolised the Assyrian conqueror (cf. Is. xxvii. 8; Ez. xvii. 10, xix. 12; Ps. xlviii. 8). It is similarly used of calamity in general. So in Job,

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Demosthenes *De Corona*, § 188: τὸν τῇ πόλει περιστάντα κίνδυνον παρελθεῖν ἰποιήσεν ὥσπερ νέφος. For this and a few other classical parallels I am indebted to Mr. Mackail.



of the sudden destruction of the wicked: "He lays him down rich, but shall not do so again; he openeth his eyes, and is not. Terrors overtake him like waters; by night a whirlwind steals him away. An east wind carries him off, and he departs; it sweepeth him out of his place" (Job xxvii. 19-21, where see Delitzsch's note on east winds, north winds, and whirlwinds in Palestine, and cf. Geikie, Vol. II., pp. 61-64). In one passage in Jeremiah sinful Israel is apparently compared to a wind: "A sharp wind from the bare hills of the desert is the way of my people, not for fanning, nor for cleansing; a stormy wind from them meets me (saith the Lord), therefore will I hold judgment upon them" (Jer. iv. 11). The words "not for fanning, nor for cleansing," imply that the wind was too violent for winnowing the grain, a process which is still carried out in Palestine by the help of a light wind. (Geikie, I., pp. 146, 149, 150). The most frequent metaphorical use of the wind is in conjunction with dust and stubble, to indicate the destruction and dispersion of enemies: "Let them be as chaff before the wind"; "I beat them small as the dust before the wind"; "They shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and as whirling dust before the whirlwind"; "Wilt thou terrify a leaf driven to and fro, and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?" Such sentences as these are too familiar to need further illustration.<sup>1</sup> But before passing from the wind, we ought not to omit the proverb: "As the north wind bringeth rain, so does a backbiting tongue an angry countenance" (xxv. 23).

We pass now from wind to fire. Here we may well distinguish between the few examples in which there are similes from fire and the more numerous cases where fire is used metaphorically to express what is spiritual by a material symbol. Of the first class Isaiah can, as usual, supply the finest specimens. Here are two. The first

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ps. xxxv. 5, lxxxiii. 14; Isaiah xvii. 13, xl. 24, xli. 2; Jer. xiii. 24; Job xiii. 25, etc.

combines the simile of fire with the familiar symbolism of the tree: "Therefore as the fire's tongue devoureth stubble, and hay melteth in a flame, so their root shall become as rottenness, and their blossom go up as dust." And again: "Unrighteousness burnt like fire, consuming thorns and briars, and kindled in the thickets of the forest, so that they rolled upwards in a volume of smoke" (Isaiah v. 24; ix. 17. Cf. xxxiii. 11; Mal. iii. 19; Joel ii. 5; Ps. lxxxiii. 15; *Iliad* XI. 155f).

Fire may be the symbol of mischief, trouble, or punishment. Thus of the first, in Isaiah l. 11: "Behold all ye that kindle a fire and set light to brands, begone into the flame of your fire and into the brands that ye have kindled." The meaning of the figure is not wholly clear, but it probably refers either to the rage of unrestrained passions among a certain section of the exiles, or more definitely to the plots and persecutions to which the same party subjected the pious. Fire as the symbol of trouble can be illustrated by the proverbial phrase (Ps. lxvi. 12), "to go through fire and water," which is elaborated by II. Isaiah into the stately period: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (xliii. 2). Then for fire as punishment we get the following from the same writer: "Behold they are become as stubble, the fire hath burned them; they cannot rescue their soul from the clutch of the flame; it is not a coal to give warmth, a fire to sit before" (xlvi. 14). The last line is very grim.

That Yahveh should frequently be symbolised by or compared to fire is, from an historical point of view, perfectly natural. For to the fire the essence of his being, or the substance of his nature, was originally akin. I do not therefore, propose to deal here with the numerous descriptions of Divine theophanies, either past or predicted, in which there is a half-literal, half-metaphorical usage of the

fire symbolism.<sup>1</sup> Yet two passages in Isaiah can hardly be passed over. Both relate to the judgment of God upon Assyria. In the first it is to be noticed how the image from fire is changed into an image from water, and this again into one from agriculture, and that into one from hunting: "Behold the name of Yahveh cometh from far, burning with anger, and in thick uplifting of smoke; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue like devouring fire, and his breath is like an overflowing torrent, dividing even to the neck, to swing nations in the face of nothingness; and a bridle which leadeth astray (shall be) upon the cheeks of the peoples" (xxx. 27, 28). The second is prefixed by an image from sickness, so that the Assyrians are first compared to a robust man, and then to a forest and a garden: "The Lord shall send against his fat limbs wasting leanness, and under his glory shall burn a burning like the burning of fire; and the Light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame, and it shall kindle and devour his briars and thorns in one day; and the glory of his forest and of his garden-land shall it consume; and the remnant of the trees of this forest shall be few, that a child may write them" (x. 16-19).

Jeremiah compares God's Word to fire. "Is not my word like as a fire, saith Yahveh; and like as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (xxiii. 29). It is here compared to a fire because of its prevailing character of severity and punishment. In another passage the object of the metaphor is very different. Jeremiah gives us a glimpse of the inward conflict that was perpetually being carried on in his own soul between the desire for tranquillity and peace and the higher compulsion to embody the felt Divine inspiration in impassioned utterance: "When I say, I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name, then it becometh in my heart as a burning

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<sup>1</sup> Pure metaphor was, I suppose, intended in such late passages as Zech. ii. 9; Isaiah xxxiii. 14.

fire shut up in my bones ; and I weary myself to hold it in, but cannot" (xx. 9 ; cf. Ps. xxxix. 4 ; *Æneid* IV. 12).

If God and his word are thus compared to fire, they are naturally also compared to light : "The Lord is my light" (Ps. xxvii. 1). "In thy light do we see light" (*ibid.*, xxxvi. 9). "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee ; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Is. lx. 19). These passages, and such as these, are too familiar for comment. The last is a good instance of the half-literal, half-metaphorical language of the Babylonian Isaiah.

Both the first and the second Isaiah use light as an emblem of prosperity and salvation. Thus, "The people that walk in darkness see a great light ; they that dwell in the land of deadly shade, light shineth brilliantly upon them" (ix. 1 ; cf. Psalm xviii. 29). Or, again, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing will spring forth speedily" (Is. lviii. 8). Light is truth and goodness ; darkness falsity and evil : "Woe unto those that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !" (Is. v. 20.) There are three interesting instances of the metaphor in Proverbs : "A commandment is a lamp, and teaching is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (vi. 23 ; cf. Ps. cxix. 105). The second is very curious, and of importance to the archæologist. "A lamp of Yahveh's is the spirit of man ; it searches through all the chambers of the body" (xx. 27).<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch states that it was upon the basis of this adage that the seven-branched candlestick became an old Jewish symbol of the soul. The proverb itself, with its quaint psychology, apparently implies that the spirit is able to penetrate into every nook and corner of the human personality, and establish a rigid self-inspection and a searching moral criticism. The last of

<sup>1</sup> Among the examples of metaphors quoted by Aristotle (*Rhet.* iii. 10 § 7), is ὅτι τὸν νοῦν ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἀνῆψεν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ· ἀμφω γὰρ δηλοῖ τι.

the three is simpler and more direct; it speaks of the difference between the wicked and the righteous: "The path of the wicked is thick darkness; they know not at what they stumble. The path of the righteous is as the brightness of the morning light, which becomes brighter and brighter till the fulness of day" (iv. 18, 19). The victorious confidence and prosperous security of the righteous deepens more and more as life goes on—a curious illustration of the inveterate Old Testament combination of goodness and prosperity. For the light of the righteous, in so far as it typifies his spiritual knowledge and the firmness of his faith, may not improbably advance in brightness from year to year; but to the author of the proverb such a fuller knowledge and deeper faith implied also a corresponding outward prosperity, so that the "light" typifies both the inward essence and the outward accident.

Before passing from light and fire to the sun, their source, and to the stars of the night, two isolated metaphors should not be passed over without quotation. The first is from Job (v. 7): "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward," in which the point of comparison, the natural necessity of either quality, is very remarkable and unusual.<sup>1</sup> The second is from that 25th chapter of Proverbs, which, with the two following chapters, has already provided us with so many interesting metaphors. "If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee" (21, 22). Apparently the coals of fire are intended to symbolise the inward pangs of remorse and self-reproach, pangs such as Jean Valjean felt when the Bishop, confronted with the thief, pretended that the stolen candlesticks were a gift.

It is curious that, although by far the greater number of Biblical metaphors are taken from outward nature, there

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<sup>1</sup> Compare the string of questions in Amos iii. 3-8.

should be so very few from the heavenly bodies. Perhaps they were too distant to impress. That, at least, is the quality which has suggested a few comparisons, *e.g.*, "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is God's mercy to them that fear him" (Ps. ciii. 11; cf. xxxvi. 6, lvii. 11). Or were they too constant and changeless? (cf. Ps. lxxxix. 37, 38; Isaiah lxvi. 22). For the stars, at any rate, supply no metaphor or comparison, except from their numberlessness (Gen. xv. 5, xxii. 17; Jer. xxxiii. 22).<sup>1</sup> Oddly enough the poet of the *Iliad* hardly ever uses the stars for that purpose; it is their clear shining and dazzling brilliancy which form the subject of his glorious star similes, and even in the single exception to this rule it is their brightness, as well as their number, which provokes and substantiates the simile, as readers of the Laureate will remember. But there is one Biblical exception to the contrary rule, and that a notable one in a notable passage; for it occurs in the prophecy of the resurrection in the book of Daniel: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting abhorrence. But they that be wise shall shine as the shining of the firmament, and they that have brought many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 2, 3; cf. Wisdom iii. 7).

Here may find a place the fine simile in the "last words of David": "Who ruleth justly over men, who ruleth in the fear of God, is like the morning light at sunrise, a morning without rain, when through sunshine after rain grass springeth from the earth" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4). And here also the image from Malachi of the "Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings" (iii. 20), in which righteousness is symbolised under the figure of the sun,

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morris Joseph reminds me of Numbers xxiv. 17 ("A star shall come forth out of Jacob"), to which should be added Isaiah xiv. 12. For sun metaphors he also adduces Judges v. 31, Ps. lxxxiv. 12 (God a sun), Jer. xv. 9 (sun=prosperity), and Cant. vi. 10 quoted above.

and the sun under the figure of a bird, of which the wings are rays.

It is now high time to come down from heaven to earth, and from elemental forces to the concrete objects of inanimate nature.

Let us first collect metaphors from vegetation generally, and then from that portion of it which is under the control of man, and nurtured for his benefit.

I suppose that the poets of all races have used the decay, death and resurrection of the vegetable world as a subject for metaphor and parable. Trees and flowers are either like man because they fade and die, or they are unlike him because though they die to-day they are re-born to-morrow. Both thoughts occur in the Scriptures. The first may be expressed generally, as in the beautiful 103rd Psalm: "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (ciii. 15, 16). Or again, in the 90th Psalm, where the idea of the perpetual renewal and the perpetual decay of humanity are touchingly alluded to: "Thou (*i.e.*, God) stormest upon them (*i.e.*, men); they fall into sleep; in the morning they are as grass which sprouts again; in the morning it blossoms and sprouts again; in the evening it is cut down and withers" (xc. 5, 6). This touches close upon the famous metaphor in the sixth book of the Iliad, to which there is so curious a parallel in Ecclesiasticus: "Even as are the generations of leaves, such are those likewise of men; the leaves that be the wind scattereth on the earth, and the forest buddeth and putteth forth more again, while the season of spring is at hand; so of the generations of men, one springeth and another passeth away" (VI. 146; cf. Ecc. xiv. 18). More usually in Scripture this metaphor is employed for the speedy fate which dogs, or, it is hoped, may dog, the fortunes of the wicked. The most famous example is from Psalm cxxix., where, as is usual in the Homeric similes, but is so rare in the Bible, there is a number of incidental accessories to make the

main idea more vivid. "Let (the wicked) be as the grass of the housetops, which withers before it is unsheathed; with which the mower fills not his hand, nor he that binds sheaves his bosom; and they that go by say not, The blessing of Yahveh be upon you; we bless you in the name of Yahveh" (cxxxix. 6-8; cf. Cheyne's Notes, and Geikie i. 42; cf. also Ps. xxxvii. 2; xcii. 8; Job viii. 12; Isaiah xxxvii. 27).

Yet flowers and trees have a resurrection or immortality of their own, which, according to earlier thought, is denied to man. It is interesting to compare two examples of this same idea, one from Hebrew and one from Greek literature.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew instance—it is from Job—does not, like the Greek, allude to the ordinary yearly resurrection of plants, but to a more peculiar quality of trees, characteristic especially, as it would appear, of the palm, but also, as we shall see from Isaiah, where the same metaphor is used for a more hopeful purpose, of the terebinth and the oak. Job then complains:—

For the tree there is hope: if it be cut down it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail. Though its root wax old in the ground, and its stock perish in the dust, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant, but man——

the contrast is also worth quoting, for it contains a fresh, hitherto unquoted, metaphor from streams or canals:—

——but man dieth and lieth low; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from a lake, and a river decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more he shall not awake, nor be aroused out of his sleep.<sup>2</sup>

The Greek parallel is from *Moschus' Lament over his Master Bion*:—

<sup>1</sup> Here too is one in Latin: *Redditur arboribus florens revirentibus ætas; ergo non homini quod fuit ante redit?* (Albinovanus, *Æl.* ii. 113.)

<sup>2</sup> Job xiv. 7-12. See Delitzsch's *Commentary* and Wetzstein's illustrative note. Also, Cheyne's *Job and Solomon*, p. 28; for verse 11, cf. Isaiah xix. 5, for the author of Job probably thought of the Nile, and *Die* is not *die* See, but *der* See.



Ah me, when the mallows wither in the garden, and the green parsley, and the curled tendrils of the anise, on a later day they live again, and spring in another year; but we men, we, the great and mighty, or wise, when once we have died, in hollow earth we sleep, gone down into silence: a right long, and endless, and unawakening sleep. (*Moschus* III. Mr. Lang's Translation).

I said, in passing, that the metaphor from a cut-down tree was used by Isaiah. It occurs at the end of his inaugural sixth chapter, in connection with the doctrine of the Remnant. Judgment must succeed judgment, but without a full extermination, "for as the terebinth and the oak, of which, after the felling, a stock (*i.e.*, a stock from which fresh shoots will spring) remaineth, so a holy seed shall be the stock thereof (*i.e.*, of the tree which symbolises Israel)."<sup>1</sup>

Job and Moschus contrast reviving vegetation with the mortality of man; the Second Isaiah contrasts the decay of vegetation with the eternity of God's Word. But the passage is too familiar to justify citation (Isaiah xl. 6-8).

Before passing on to metaphors proper taken from trees, there is one noble simile in Isaiah which must not be overlooked: "The heart of Ahaz shook, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest shake before the wind" (vii. 2. Mr. Mackail compares Soph. *Fr. Aegæus* 24).<sup>2</sup>

In a passage from Isaiah, quoted above, we have already come across the metaphor of a forest or a thicket to typify a hostile army. It is a fairly frequent usage. Thus, in the same chapter: "Behold the Lord Yahveh of Hosts lops off the mass of boughs with a terrible crash, and the high of station are felled, and the lofty are brought low; and he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon (still the Assyrian army) shall fall through a glorious one."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah vi. 13. Cf. Dillman's note. Cp. also Isaiah xi. 1; liii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Notice also, "As the days of a tree are the days of my people" (Is. lxxv. 22).

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah x. 33, 34; cf. ii. 13, xxxii. 19; xl. 24; Ezekiel xxxi. 3-18; Jer. xii. 2; Amos. ii. 9; Ps. xxxvii. 35; see Cheyne.

In this passage and in others referred to in the note, it is Israel's enemies which are described as trees. In other places it is Israel himself who is now symbolised as an olive (Hos. xiv. 6; Jer. xi. 16), and now as a fir (Hos. xiv. 8), a cedar (Ezek. xvii.; cf. Numbers xxiv. 6), and a forest (Ezek. xxi. 1-4). So also of the righteous individual, who may possibly often himself be only the personification of Israel. Thus, we have the elaborate simile in Jeremiah: "Blessed is the man that trusts in Yahveh, and whose hope Yahveh is. For he is as a tree planted by the waters, that spreads out its roots by the river, and does not fear when the heat comes, but its leaf is ever green, and it will not be careful in the year of drought, neither cease from bearing fruit."<sup>1</sup> Or, again in the Psalms, where, however, "the righteous" are probably synonymous with Israel: "The righteous shall spring up like a palm tree; he shall wax tall like a cedar in Lebanon (in contrast to the scrubby and transitory grass that symbolised the wicked in verse 8). Planted in the house of Yahveh, they shall spring up in the courts of our God. They shall still shoot forth in old age, full of sap shall they be and flourishing" (Ps. xcii. 13-15; cf. lli. 10. *Odyssey* VI. 162).<sup>2</sup>

With just a reference to a few metaphors from mountains and thorns,<sup>3</sup> we may now pass on to metaphors from man's relations to nature, whether in pastoral or agricultural life, and to such objects as the fig tree and the vine, which receive tending and cultivation from the hands of man.

In this connection, one thinks at once of the long agricultural parable in Isaiah xxviii. 23-29. Unfortunately, the application of the parable is by no means clear. Is it that, as the farmer ploughs in order to sow, and threshes different grains with different degrees of violence, even so

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. xvii. 8; cf. the contrast xvii. 5, 6; Ps. i. 3; Job xxix. 19.

<sup>2</sup> As to the meaning of lli. 10, xcii. 14, see especially Hupfeld.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxx. 7; xxxvi. 7; Prov. xv. 19; xxvi. 9; 2 Samuel xxiii. 6; Nahum i. 10; Micah vii. 4; Ez. ii. 6; Koh. vii. 6; Numb. xxxiii. 55.

are there degrees of rigour in God's judgment processes and redemptive ends beyond the judgment, for which alone it was inflicted? Or, again, are we to interpret it with Professor Cheyne, but against Dillmann, as an appeal to the politicians to observe moderation and rationality in their moral and civic conduct? The former seems, upon the whole, the more probable explanation, in spite of the want of connection with the preceding portion of the chapter.

Here is the place for a whole series of detached metaphors from ploughing and sowing, and all the various details of agricultural procedure.

Similes in this province are not numerous; it is mainly metaphor. Noticeable, however, is the interrogation of Amos (vi. 12): "Shall horses run upon the rock? Does one plough the sea with oxen? For ye have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood,"—of which the meaning, apparently, is that the perversion of justice in Israel is as unnatural as the former idea, and as wanton or profitless as the latter.

There is an odd mixture of personification and metaphor in the 129th Psalm, in which personified Israel complains that his enemies "have plowed upon his back, and made long their furrows."

Frequent is the transference of the ideas of ploughing, sowing and reaping from the material to the spiritual. These metaphors are already prominent in Hosea. Thus in x. 11, the comparison of Ephraim to a heifer leads on to further images from agriculture: "Ephraim is a heifer broken in and loving to thresh, and I have (hitherto) spared the beauty of her neck; (but now) I will make Ephraim to draw, Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break up his clods."<sup>1</sup> Here, according to Professor Cheyne, whose rendering I have, as usual, quoted, we have Israel in its prosperity figured as a heifer whose business was but to thresh, for

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<sup>1</sup> "Judah" is out of place here. See Oort, *Theol. Tijds.*, 1890, p. 496. His emendation of v. 12 on basis of LXX. seems very dubious.

"the work of treading out the corn was pleasant and easy," while the coming distress and judgment are typified as ploughing and tilling under a galling yoke. Then in the next verse, while the heifer metaphor is given up, the agricultural images are continued: "Sow to yourselves according to righteousness, and ye shall reap in proportion to love: break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek Yahveh, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped injustice: ye have eaten the fruit of lies." To reap injustice here means that the only result of their evil life—typified as a ploughing of wickedness—will be (the perfect is prophetic) the cruel oppression of the foreign conqueror (cf. Job iv. 8). A similar metaphor is Jeremiah's (iv. 3): "Break up for you a fallow ground, and sow not among thorns." And the kindred image in Hosea: "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it (*i.e.*, Israel typified as a cornfield) has no standing corn, the blade will yield no meal; or if it yield, strangers shall swallow it up" (Hosea viii. 7; cf. Prov. xxii. 8). Simpler and more familiar is the beautiful figure of the Psalmist: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing the store of seed, he shall come back with joy, bearing his sheaves" (Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6).<sup>1</sup>

Harvest joy is proverbial, and was connected with religious thanksgivings (cf. Isaiah ix. 2 with Cheyne's note; Ps. iv. 7). Metaphorically, reaping and gleaning stand for punishment. So Isaiah: "And it shall be as when the husbandman gathereth blades of corn together, and his arm reapeth the ears; yea, it shall be as when one gathers ears in the valley of the plain. And a gleaning shall be left thereof, as at the striking of an olive tree two or three berries at the uttermost point, four or five on the branches of the fruit tree" (xvii. 5, 6; cf. xxiv. 13; Jeremiah vi. 9, ix. 21,

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<sup>1</sup> Sowing and reaping metaphors are also found in Greek, *e.g.* Æsch. *Pers.* 821, and Plato *Phaedrus*, 260 C. Aristotle (*Rhet.* III. 3, § 4) calls them too poetic for prose. See Thompson's note on the *Phaedrus* passage.

xliv. 9; Ob. 5).<sup>1</sup> Similarly in Joel, where the wine-press is added to the harvest: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come tread, for the press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great" (iv. 13).<sup>2</sup>

The scattering of Israel by exile is not only aptly likened to winnowing (Jer. xv. 7) but, by a striking though confused metaphor, to the sifting of corn in a sieve. "For, lo, I will command, and I will shake the house of Israel to and fro among all nations, as corn is shaken in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos ix. 9).

In all these instances the thresher, reaper and winnower is God, but sometimes it is Israel who punishes his enemies. So in II. Isaiah: "Behold, I will make thee a new threshing roller, sharp, double-edged; thou shalt thresh mountains and crush them, and shalt make hills as chaff" (Isaiah xli. 15-16, Micah iv. 13; cf. Jer. li. 33).

Other details of agricultural life furnish material for occasional similes and metaphors. Thus we have the yoke,<sup>3</sup> typifying either slavery and oppression (1 Kings xii. 4; Is. ix. 3) or a burden of iniquity (Lam. i. 14), the cart that shakes under its weight of sheaves (Amos ii. 13), the weeds that spring up in the furrows of an ill-kept field (Hosea x. 4), the booths of a vineyard neglected after the vintage. This last figure is more than once strikingly applied. So in Isaiah's first chapter: "The daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, or a lodging-place in a cucumber-field" (Is. i. 8; cf. xxiv. 20). So in Job, of the wicked, whose glory is transitory: "He builds his house as the moth, and as

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mackail thinks one might here compare the lovely lines of Sappho' (*Fr.* 93, ed. Bergk):—

οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὕσδῳ  
 ἄκρον ἐπ' ἄκροτάτῳ· λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδόρπῃες,  
 οὐ μὲν ἐκλεάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἰδύναντ' ἐπικέσθαι.

<sup>2</sup> Ripeness for harvest supplies a strange simile in Job v. 26: "Thou shalt come to the grave in unbroken strength, as a sheaf of corn is gathered in its season."

<sup>3</sup> 'Yoke' in the religious sense is not yet found in the O.T. Yet cp. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lam. iii. 27, cp. Psalms of Solomon vii. 8, with Ryle and James' Notes).

the booth which the watchman maketh" (xxvii. 18, with Delitzsch's note and Tristram, *Natural History of Bible*, p. 443). These booths, as occupied, form a different simile for Jeremiah: "The enemies of Jerusalem have encamped against her round about as keepers of a field" (iv. 17).

The two cultivated trees which are the subjects of the largest number of Biblical similes and metaphors are the fig-tree and the vine. The early fig was a great delicacy; hence we get similes like: "The fading flower of Ephraim's glittering bravery shall become as an early fig before the fruit harvest, which whoso seeth, while it is yet in his hand he swalloweth it" (Isaiah xxviii. 4; cf. Nahum iii. 12; Micah vii. 1). Israel, again, is likened to, or typified as, a fig-tree. Thus, Israel in his youth was found by God "as grapes in the wilderness, as the first ripe in the fig-tree at her first season" (Hosea ix. 10). So, in Jeremiah, we get the parable of the two baskets of figs, one having the first ripe, very good figs, the other very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad (xxiv.).

No metaphor from the vegetable world is more usual than that which is connected with the vine-tree, with the grape, and with the drunkenness which is the grape's most characteristic fruit.

Israel is often represented under the figure of a vine. One starts with the blessing of Jacob. Joseph is there typified as "a young, fruitful vine by a well, whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. xlix. 22). Then comes Hosea: "Israel was a luxuriant vine, which freely put forth fruit" (x. 1). Then there is the famous parable in Isaiah, too familiar for quotation (Isaiah v. 1-7). The metaphor of a vine degenerating is taken up by Jeremiah: "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how, then, art thou turned into the degenerate shoots of a strange vine unto me?"<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel uses the vine figure in his usual elaborate

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<sup>1</sup> ii. 21. Cf. vi. 9, xii. 10; and for bad grapes typifying the enemy Deut. xxxii. 32.

way (xvii. 1-10, xix. 10-14). The metaphor seems to have become so common that in one passage he even covers it with contempt. Jerusalem and the men of Judah need not boast themselves of their prominent glory as the vineyard of God. For "what is the vine-tree more than any other tree, or the vine-branch more than any other branch among the trees of the forest?" It is meet for no work, but is cast in the fire for fuel (xv. 1-8). At great length is the vine metaphor worked out by a late Psalmist (lxxx. 9-17), and we find it once more in a late prophecy now included in Isaiah. God's vineyard shall ultimately triumph over its enemies: "In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and bud, and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit" (xxvii. 1-6).

Israel's foes are far more rarely typified as vines. Once Isaiah uses the metaphor for the Assyrians: "For thus hath Yahveh said unto me, I will be still and look on in my mansion, while there is clear heat in sunshine, while there are clouds of night-mist in the heat of the vintage. For before the vintage, when the blossom is over and the bud becometh a ripening grape, he shall cut off the branches with pruning-knives, and the shoots he heweth away" (xviii. 4, 5, with Cheyne's Notes; cf. Deut. xxxii. 32).

A more domestic simile is that of the Psalmist: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine in the recesses of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table" (cxxviii. 3).

The unripe grape suggested the familiar proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. xxxi. 29; Ezek. xviii. 2); while the result of the wicked's injustice in that he is deprived of offspring, is, in an odd simile in Job, compared to a vine which, not suffering its grapes to come to maturity, shakes them off while they are yet unripe (xv. 33. See Del.).

The fermentation and effervescence of new wine is alluded to by Elihu: "Behold it is within me as wine which

has not been opened; like new bottles, it is ready to burst" (Job xxxii. 19).<sup>1</sup>

Not wholly clear is the simile in II. Isaiah: "As when the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for my servants, that I destroy not the whole" (lxv. 8); which Dillmann explains to mean no more than that as the grapes which already contain serviceable juice, suited for the vintage, are tenderly dealt with, so will God act towards his people. Delitzsch and Cheyne give more detailed interpretations.

Another curious image from a particular trait in the treatment of wine is found in Zephaniah and Jeremiah. It appears to have been the custom to leave the new-made wine with—that is, upon—its lees or sediment, to the end that it might retain and absorb more strength and aroma. Such wine, so kept and then passed through a strainer, was much prized (Is. xxv. 6). But bad or poor wine left on its lees would become the worse and the more ill-flavoured. So Zephaniah (i. 12) speaks of the men in Jerusalem who are "settled or thickened on their lees"—that is, who have become deeply ingrained with spiritual callousness, and who say, in their heavy dulness, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." Jeremiah (xlviii. 11) speaks of Moab as having been at ease from his youth: "He has become settled on his lees, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; therefore his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed." This means that Moab's quiet life has confirmed and deepened the traits—here, doubtless, unflattering traits were referred to—of his national character. The punishment which is to befall him continues the figure: "I will send tilters unto him, and they shall tilt him, and shall empty his vessels and break his bottles" (xlviii. 12. See Cheyne).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the simile Ps. cxix. 83, "I am become like a wine skin in the smoke," the point of comparison is only that he is regarded as equally useless and valueless as an empty unused wine skin hung up amid the smoke. See Nowack and Del.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently, too, transferring the wine from one cask to another, or



God's cup of reeling is a frequent symbol for confusion, bewilderment and distress. "Thou hast showed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink of the wine of reeling" (Ps. lx. 5). Or, again: "Wake thee up, arise, O Jerusalem, who hast drunk at the hand of Yahveh the cup of his fury: the goblet-cup of reeling hast thou drunken and wrung out" (Isaiah li. 17, 21, 22; Ezek. xxiii. 33; Hab. ii. 16). The image is portrayed as a concrete fact in Jeremiah, who receives from God's hand his cup of fury, and is bidden to make the nations drink it (Jer. xxv. 15-28). The following verse from the seventy-fifth Psalm has, perhaps, suggested a glorious stanza in Rabbi Ben Ezra: "In the hand of Yahveh there is a cup with wine—foaming wine that is full of mixture; and he pours out to this one and to that one; surely the dregs thereof shall all the ungodly of the earth sup up and drink"<sup>1</sup> (lxxv. 8).

Drunkenness may typify spiritual blindness or perplexity (Isaiah xix. 14; Jer. xxiii. 9). It also supplies the figure for sailors of a ship in a storm at sea, who reel about the deck in bewildered witlessness (Ps. cvii. 27); and, finally, it is combined with the image of the wind-tossed booth to illustrate the convulsions of the earth upon the Judgment-day (Isaiah xxiv. 20).

Other products of agricultural life also used for metaphors are butter, oil, and honey—butter for smoothness, oil for softness. So in the Psalter: "His mouth is smoother than butter, but his heart is all war; his words

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from skins to skins, made it milder; but care had to be taken lest this process made the wine sour. See Lowth on Isaiah xxv. 6, and a curious Latin metaphor for degeneration taken from wine becoming sour by being poured from vessel to vessel:—"Quare quum integri nihil fuerit in hac gente plena, quam valde eam putamus tot transfusionibus coacuisse"—"Since in this people in its original unity there was nothing good, how much must it have degenerated through so many transplantations." Cicero, *Scaurus* § 43, quoted by Naegelsbach *Latvinische Stylistik*, p. 445 (ed. 1881).

<sup>1</sup> So Cheyne. See his Notes. He compares *Il. XXIV. 527*.

are softer than oil, and yet they are drawn swords.”<sup>1</sup> The precious oil that ran down upon Aaron’s beard (Ps. cxxxiii. 2) has already been noticed; the metaphor of another Psalmist is, perhaps, also worth a line of printer’s ink: “Let the righteous smite me in kindness and correct me; oil so fine let not my head refuse.”<sup>2</sup>

A number of conventional similes and constant metaphors are constructed from the net, as well as from the “broad” or the “slippery path.” The net is the trouble in which the righteous have been involved through the machinations of the wicked. It is parallel to and sometimes combined with the gin and the snare.<sup>3</sup> God’s net, symbolising his judgment, is used by Hosea (vii. 12), Ezekiel (xii. 13, xvii. 20, xxxii. 3), and the author of Job (xix. 6; cf. Lam. i. 13), while Isaiah boldly compares God to a snare: “He shall be for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble thereat and fall, and be broken and snared and taken” (Isaiah viii. 14, 15).

The “broad path” in the Psalter typifies prosperity and deliverance (xviii. 20, xxxi. 9, cxviii. 5), and an “even path” has a quite similar meaning (xxvi. 12, xxvii. 11, cxliii. 10; Prov. xv. 19).<sup>4</sup> Slippery or narrow paths, on the contrary, typify circumstances of calamity or danger (Ps. lxxiii. 18, xxxv. 6; Jer. xxiii. 12). “Slipping off the path” may have a more spiritual meaning, as in lxiii. 2, where it stands for religious unfaith; while “firm steps” may denote moral stability, as in xxxvii. 31.<sup>5</sup> A more directly

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. lv. 22. For honey, cf. Prov. v. 3, xvi. 24; Ps. xix. 11, cxix. 103. For a simile from butter-making cf. Prov. xxx. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxli. 5. See Cheyne, and for the assonance cf. Ko. vii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Psalm xxv. 15, xxxi. 5, xxxv. 7, cxl. 6, lxiv. 5, cxli. 9, 10, cxix. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the use of “mountains” for security. Ps. xxx. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. further Ps. xl. 3, xxiii. 3; Isaiah xxvi. 7.

religious metaphor is the "path of life,"<sup>1</sup> which is equivalent to the ways or paths of God.<sup>2</sup>

Pastoral life furnishes the standing metaphor of the flock, which symbolises Israel, while the shepherd is either its king (and in the plural its princes and rulers), or he is God. Perhaps the oldest use of the figure is in Kings (1 Kings xxii. 17), where Micaiah says that he saw "all Israel scattered upon the mountains as sheep that have not a shepherd. And Yahveh said: These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace." The figure is fully worked out both by Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer. xxiii. 1-4; Ezekiel xxxiv. 1-31). It is most delicately handled by II. Isaiah in a single verse: "God will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those which give suck" (xl. 11; cf. Micah vii. 14). It is very frequent in the Psalter; Israel is the sheep of Yahveh's pasture (c. 3, lxxvii. 20, lxxviii. 31, lxxix. 13, xcv. 7), while this phase of the figure culminates in the famous Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd" (xxiii.), in which the figure is more or less kept up through the first four verses.

Israel is also represented as the helpless sheep which are driven to the slaughter. So in the Maccabean Psalm (xliv. 23): "For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter."<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah compares himself to "a mild lamb, or an ox that is led to the slaughter" (xi. 19); and in the great fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, whereas Israel has gone astray like a flock, the suffering Servant let himself be humbled, and opened not his mouth; "as the sheep that is led to the slaughter, and an ewe that before her shearers is dumb" (liii. 6, 7; cf. Ps. cxix. 176).

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xvi. 11, and frequent in Proverbs; *e.g.*, ii. 19, v. 6, vi. 23, x. 17, xv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xvii. 5, xxv. 4, xxvii. 11, cxliii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Mackail's *Select Epigrams*, etc., XII. 35, p. 276.

We now may turn from outdoor life and objects of nature to life within the home and the domestic relationships. The relation of father to son, of mother to child, of husband to wife, are all made use of for metaphorical purposes, and chiefly in that to each of them is likened the relation of God to Israel. Thus for the first we have Hosea's touching expostulation: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son . . . I taught Ephraim to walk, and took them up in my arms. . . I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."<sup>1</sup> So in Deuteronomy: "In the wilderness thou, Israel, hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went until ye came into this place."<sup>2</sup> And, again, with a different example of paternal behaviour: "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord chasteneth thee"; which is improved in Proverbs into the adage, "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth;" and with which we may also compare the Psalmist's, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."<sup>3</sup> Deutero-Isaiah uses the relationship of mother and child to express the unforgetting kindness of God's love for Israel: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet I will not forget thee" (xlix. 15; cf.

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<sup>1</sup> Hosea xi. 1-3. The figure is not kept up consistently. For the text see Cheyne, who also cites a pretty parallel from the *Rig-Veda*, "Thou barest him as a father bears his son on his lap."

<sup>2</sup> i. 31. Cf. Isaiah xlvii. 3, 4; lxiii. 9. Moses repudiates such a charge Numbers xi. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. viii. 5; Prov. iii. 12; Ps. ciii. 13. Cf. Mal. iii. 17. The greatest grief is likened to the sorrow for an only son. Am. viii. 10; Jer. vi. 26; Zech. xii. 10. The idea that God, as a loving father, chastens his human children is also found in Seneca, e.g., *De Prudentia* II, where a difference is drawn between a father's severe training and a mother's spoiling. God's method is like a father's: "Patrium habet Deus adversus bonos viros animum, et illos fortiter amat; et operibus, inquit, doloribus, ac damnis exagitantur ut verum colligant robur" (Stewart's *Seneca, Minor Dialogues*, 1889, Bell; p. 4).

lxvi. 13). A better simile for peaceful and happy resignation in God's inscrutable will it would be hard to find than the Psalmist's: "Surely I have composed and quieted my soul, as a weaned child in its mother's arms; my soul is within me like a weaned child" (cxxx. 2). The weaned child (in the East one must suppose a child of at least three years,<sup>1</sup> is happy and content by the mere presence of and contact with its mother; so the resigned spirit, filled with faith, is happy and content in the mere consciousness of nearness to and communion with God.

The relationship of husband and wife applied metaphorically to the relation of God to Israel is a too elaborate chapter in the religious history and thought of the ancient Hebrews to be touched upon here. Suffice it to allude to the similes taken from the joyousness of bridegroom and bride (Is. lxii. 5), of which one outward feature was the festive attire with its ornaments (*e.g.*, Jer. ii. 32; Isaiah lxi. 10). In the book of Proverbs ornaments of head and neck typify teaching and instruction (*e.g.*, i. 9, iv. 9, xx. 15). They also suggest the material for many a simile. Thus: "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who is without discretion." Or again: "As an ear-ring of gold and an ornament of fine gold so is a nice speech upon a listening ear." And, lastly: "Apples of gold in chased work of silver; a word smoothly spoken."<sup>2</sup> Prominent and prized among personal ornaments is the seal-ring or signet. So we get in Jeremiah: "As I live, saith Yahveh, even though Coniah . . . be the signet upon my right hand, yet will I pluck him thence" (Jer. xxii. 24). And contrariwise in Haggai; "I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, and will make thee as a signet, for

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<sup>1</sup> See Professor Cheyne's *Commentary*. (I hope Prof. Cheyne will forgive me for having perpetually made use of his translations all through this paper.)

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xi. 22, xxv. 12 (LXX., xxv. 11); for which see Cheyne, p. 144, and Delitzsch *ad loc.*

I have chosen thee, saith Yahveh of Hosts.”<sup>1</sup> Nor must the fine exclamation of the Beloved in the Song of Solomon be passed over: “Set me, as a seal, upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm” (viii. 6), a verse which has been so aptly introduced by Swinburne in the third antistrophe of his great ode upon the Proclamation of the French Republic:

“Who shall heal me; who shall come to take my part?  
Who shall set me as a seal upon his heart?  
As a seal upon his arm made bare for fight?”

The lower household relations, those of slave and hand-maiden to master and mistress also furnish their quota to the metaphorical store. For who does not remember the simile of the Psalmist: “As the eyes of servants are upon the hand of their master, as the eyes of a handmaid are upon the hand of her mistress, so our eyes are upon Yahveh our God, until he have pity upon us” (cxxxiii. 2). The day-labourer’s life supplies a simile for Job. “Has not man a hard service upon earth? Are not his days as the days of an hireling, as a servant, who pants for the shadow, and like a hireling who looks for his labour’s reward?” (vii. 2). A few other isolated and not especially interesting metaphors of this class may find a place in the notes.<sup>2</sup>

Of what goes on within a household not the least

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<sup>1</sup> ii. 23, an important passage when taken in connection with the preceding one from Jeremiah; see Stade, *Geschichte*, vol. II., 127.

<sup>2</sup> Thus we have metaphors of a “tent” applied to the heavens or to a city (as in Isaiah xl. 22, xxxiii. 20, liv. 2; Jer. x. 20; cf. Job iv. 21): A door and its hinges supplies a comparison in Prov. xxvi. 14, the corner pillars of a house in Ps. cxliv. 12. If we call our bodies “houses of clay,” that comes from Job iv. 19. We have a metaphor from a *peg* and a *key* in Isaiah xxii. 22-25 (where see Dillmann), and from the former in Ezra ix. 8; a simile from singing and playing in Ezekiel xxxiii. 32, and one from throwing a ball in Isaiah xxii. 18. I do not propose to enter into the discussion of the long passage in Koh. xii. 1-7, nor how far the description of old age is symbolic and metaphorical in its every detail or not. Cf. Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, ps. 226-230. I should not have omitted to quote in the text the proverbial “I will sweep it with the besom of destruction” (Is. xiv. 23).

important part are the doings in the kitchen. It is not surprising, therefore, that we get many metaphors borrowed from cooking, or from food and drink—all the more so as with a solemn feast religious ideas are clearly associated. Even the scullery supplies a simile which, simple as it is, has won the warm approval of Bishop Lowth. It occurs in a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and is preceded by a figure from building: "I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down" (2 Kings xxi. 13). From wiping dishes there is only a step to the oven, which, in its glowing heat, is a common simile without further expansion (*e.g.*, Lam. v. 10; Isaiah xxxi. 9; Ps. xxi. 10; Mal. iii. 19). The simile is elaborated in Hosea. The prophet is denouncing the Ephraimite aristocracy: "They are all adulterers," he says, "as an oven kindled by the baker, who ceases from kindling after he has kneaded the dough until it is leavened. . . . For their inward part is like an oven, their heart burns in them; all the night their anger smokes: in the morning it burns as a flaming fire (Hosea vii. 4, 6). This is the rendering, with emendations in v. 6, of Professor Cheyne, and the explanation of the metaphor must be sought for in his Notes.<sup>1</sup> Then, besides the oven we have the seething pot. Thus, in Micah, as a figure of horrible oppression: "Ye princes of the house of Israel . . . who pluck their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as

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<sup>1</sup> See also Q. P. B. Less available for every student may be Oort's proposed emendations in *Theol. Tijds.*, 1890, p. 481. He reads in verse 4, מִנְפָּהִים for מִנְפָּהִים, and בָּעֵר הֵם אֶפְרוֹ for ב', מ', and מִבְּעֵר for מִבְּעֵר, and then translates: "They are all glowing with heat; they are like a burning oven, the baker of which ceases to kindle it after he has kneaded the dough until it is leavened." For another metaphor from cooking cf. Hosea vii. 8. and Cheyne's note.

flesh within the caldron" (Micah iii. 2, 3). The representation of Jerusalem, under the figure of a pot, is well worked out by Ezekiel (xxiv.). Elsewhere he quotes a popular saying, in which the metaphor of the caldron is quite differently applied. The men of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's reign, believing that the danger had passed over, were apparently wont to say in their fancied security: "This city is the caldron and we are the flesh."<sup>1</sup>

From implements of cooking we pass to food. With tears as food and drink (or with ashes as bread, Ps. cii. 9) we are familiar from the Psalms (*e.g.* lxxx. 5; xlii. 4). "The bread of adversity and the water of affliction," was original in Isaiah (xxx. 20; cf. 1 Kings xxii. 27); "gall and vinegar" make a sort of accentuated double metaphor in Psalm lxix. 21, where food and drink stand for comfort and pity, and vinegar and gall for the mockery which was dealt out in their stead (cf. Jer. viii. 14; ix. 14; xxiii. 15; Lam. iii. 15, 19). Vinegar reminds one of two good Proverbs: "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him" (x. 26). "Vinegar falling upon a wound, and he who sings songs to a heavy heart" (xxv. 20, Cheyne, p. 148).

What is the meaning of Koheleth's exhortation, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days?" (xi. 1). If, as is still possible, it refers to charity, there is a curious parallel, by way of contrast, in Theognis, who (l. 105) compares the beneficence shown to the bad with the sowing of seed upon the "hoary" sea.

Metaphors from feasts are usually of a religious character. But these may be prefaced by the quite general simile in Isaiah. The disappointment of the enemies who war against Zion shall be: "As when a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth, but he awaketh, and his soul is

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<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xi. 3, 7. So Cornill; but see also Smend and Orelli, who explain differently. Ps. lviii. 10 is unfortunately too corrupt to be made use of here. See Cheyne.



empty; and as when a thirsty man dreameth, behold, he drinketh, but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint and his soul craveth." (Isaiah xxix. 8. Note that the dream simile is also used with a different, more Homeric application, in the preceding verse.)

Feast metaphors are frequent in the Psalms. So in the twenty-third, "Thou furnishest a table before me in the presence of my foes; thou hast anointed my head with oil, my cup is abundance."<sup>1</sup> And again in Psalm xxxvi. 9, "They feast upon the fatness of thy house; and of the river of thy pleasures thou givest them their drink." This imagery is, of course, borrowed from the temple ritual, the fat of sacrificed bullocks becoming the figure for spiritual joys (cf. Psalm lxiii. 6). A similar image is expressed in the twenty-fifth chapter of Isaiah: "The Lord of Hosts shall make unto all peoples in this mountain a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well strained." The prophecy is Messianic and universalist (xxv. 6; see Cheyne and Dillmann against Grätz).

It is remarkable how few similes and metaphors are taken from the sights or avocations of life in cities. Such proverbs as "He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls;" or such comparisons as "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning" (Prov. xxv. 28; Ps. cxxx. 6), are isolated and rare. The commonest religious metaphor from city life is that of the law-suit, in which God is the plaintiff (and the judge) and Israel or the nations the defendants.<sup>2</sup>

There are a few similes from clothes. The sad mutability of human raiment was as common a feature then as now. (So *e.g.*, Ps. cii. 27; Is. li. 6.) To put on either virtue or

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxiii. 6, so Cheyne. God Himself is "the portion and the cup" in Ps. xvi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, in Hosea iv. 1, xii. 2; and then onwards in Isaiah i. 18; iii. 13; Micah vi. 2; Jer. xxv. 31; II. Isaiah xli. 1, and *passim*; Joel iv. 2, etc.

disgrace as a vesture or as a girdle is a usual figure of speech.<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah uses the odd figure of Nebuchadnezzar "wrapping himself in" the land of Egypt "as a shepherd wraps himself in his mantle," which apparently means that the Babylonian king will be able to collect together the spoils of Egypt as easily as a shepherd can fling his night cloak around his shoulders (Jer. xliii. 12, Ewald).<sup>2</sup>

Among the town-life metaphors are some interesting examples from building. The corner-stone supplies one or two, to appreciate which one must, as Professor Cheyne points out, recollect the "enormous size and cost of the foundation-stones of Eastern public buildings." Thus in Psalm cxviii., of Israel, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner-stone" (see Cheyne), and before the Psalmist, in a difficult passage of Isaiah, the application of which is much disputed, "Behold, I am he that hath laid in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of solid foundation."<sup>3</sup> In the next verse (xxviii. 17) we get the metaphor of the line and the plummet, "I will set justice for a line, and righteousness for a plummet." Here God's action or work is likened to a building, for which the main implements used are righteousness and justice. In other places the line and plummet are very strangely employed contrariwise in metaphors of destruction, to indicate that God will carry out his work of ruin with the same care and accuracy as a builder carries out his pre-arranged design. (See Del. on Isaiah xxxiv. 11.) So in the vision of Amos, "I will set a plumb-

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<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, of virtues, Isaiah xi. 5, lxi. 10; Job xxix. 14; in Isaiah lix. 17 armour is included; of cursing and disgrace, Ps. cix. 18, 19, 29.

<sup>2</sup> From weaving we get Isaiah xxxviii. 12: "Thou hast cut off, like a weaver, my life; from the warp did he sever me" (So Ch.; but see Dill.), and Job vii. 6, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Job illustrates the fleetness of his life by many other similes. Note *e.g.*, the three figures in ix. 25, 26, from the runner, the ship and the eagle—a collocation of the swiftest things on earth, in the sea and in the air.

<sup>3</sup> See Dillmann and Cheyne for the various interpretations of the text and the metaphor.

line in the midst of my people Israel" (vii. 8), and in a prophecy against Edom, "God will stretch out upon it the line of chaos and the plummet of desolation" (Isaiah xxxiv. 11; cf. 2 Kings xxi. 13; Lam. ii. 8). A Psalmist likens himself in his weakness "to a toppling wall, a fence pushed in" (lxii. 4), and Isaiah (xxx. 13) compares the sinful policy of the Jerusalem statesmen, which must inevitably end in ruin and collapse, to "a swelling (*i.e.*, increasing) and threatening breach in a high wall, which is shattered suddenly in a moment." (So Dillmann; but cf. Cheyne.) Last among the building metaphors shall come a fine passage from Ezekiel, in which Jerusalem is symbolised as a wall, the cracks and breaches in which the false prophets vainly hide by a coating of a whited plaster. God will throw down the wall with his hailstones and his wind, so that men shall say, Where is the wall, and where are they that plastered? (Ezek. xiii. 10—15. See Smend and Cornill. The interpretation is clear.)

From the art of building we may now turn to that of pottery and metal work. Books upon Palestine make the frequent pottery figures of the Bible intelligible to us. There still is made in Syria an enormous amount of coarse pottery, which is very brittle and very cheap. The comparison of Israel in its hour of tribulation to a "vessel wherein there is no pleasure" lay ready to hand and is of frequent occurrence since Hosea (Hosea viii. 8; Lam. iv. 2; Ps. xxxi. 13; Jer. xxii. 28; cf. Jer. xlviii. 38; Ps. lx. 10). So Isaiah, immediately after the wall simile quoted above, predicts that Yahveh will break this bulging wall "as one breaketh an earthen pitcher, shivering it unsparingly, so that not a sherd is found in its shivered pieces for taking fire from the hearth, or drawing water from a cistern." Dr. Geikie thus illustrates the figure:—

When accident has caused the breaking of a large vessel there are naturally some fragments comparatively large, and these are still of some use. A hollow piece serves as a cup in which to lift water from the spring, either to drink or to fill a jar. Nothing is more common

than for neighbours to borrow a few lighted coals in a hollow potsherd from each other to kindle their fire, or for a poor man to come, in the evening, to the baker's oven with his lowly fire-pan and get from it a few glowing embers to boil his tin of coffee or heat his simple food (II. 51).

This simile of his predecessor Jeremiah is commanded to enact as a visible parable before the eyes of the capital's inhabitants. He is bidden to buy a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the elders of the people and the elders of the priests, and then having gone "forth unto the valley of the sons of Hinnom," and having uttered there his prophecy of ruin and retribution, "to break the bottle in the sight of the men" that went with him, and to say, "Thus saith Yahveh of Hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again" (xix. 1-11 ; cf. Ps. ii. 9).

It was a further but natural development of the figure to make God the potter and man the pot. Isaiah leads the way. He laughs bitterly at the folly of those who would hide their purposes from God as if he could not detect and discern the machinations of their heart. "O your perverseness! should the potter be accounted as clay, that the work should say of him that made it, He made me not? and the thing formed say of him that formed it, He hath no understanding?" (xxix. 16). Jeremiah once more transforms the simile into a concrete parable in his famous visit to "the potter's house" (Jer. xviii. 1-10), and in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah the metaphor of the potter is twice employed with admirable effect. Thus, first: "Woe unto him that striveth with him that formed him, a potsherd among potsherds of the ground! Doth the clay say to him that formeth it, What makest thou? or his work (say), Thou hast no hands" (xlv. 9, reading פַּעֲלֵי; see Dill.). And, secondly, in the long prayer which extends from lxiii. 7 to lxiv. 12, the same figure is humbly used, and its truth acknowledged by the human suppliants themselves. "And now, O Yahveh, thou art our father;

we are the clay, and thou our fashioner, and the work of thy hands are we all.”<sup>1</sup>

As regards the individual metals, iron and brass are naturally types for obstinacy or endurance. (Compare Isaiah xlviii. 4; Jer. i. 18; xv. 20.) In Proverbs we come across the pregnant adage: “Iron is sharpened by iron, and a man sharpens the face of his friend” (xxvii. 17). Gold can be a type of scarcity (Isaiah xiii. 12), or of preciousness. That the gain of wisdom is better than the gain of gold, or that wisdom should be sought for as men search for silver, are familiar comparisons in Proverbs. More striking is the metaphor in Lamentations in which the nobles of Jerusalem are likened to gold: “How is the gold become dim: how is the most fine gold changed! The hallowed stones are thrown down at the corners of every street. The sons of Zion, the precious ones, who were comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the potter’s hands” (Lam. iv. 2).

But by far the most frequent metaphor suggested from the precious metals is that of refining—metaphors from alloy and dross, from their removal by the purifying processes of the furnace, or from the pure metal which is so produced. Thus, first generally in Proverbs: “Remove the dross from the silver, and the vessel is ready for the goldsmith: remove the wicked from before the king, and his throne is established in righteousness” (xxv. 4). And, again: “Silver dross spread over an earthen vessel—fervent lips and a bad heart” (xxvi. 23). Next, in the distinctly religious sphere. In the Psalms the words of God are often spoken of as pure—that is, as free from

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<sup>1</sup> xiv. 8. Eliphaz calls men “dwellers in houses of clay” (Job iv. 19) with which expression Delitzsch compares *πηλοῦ πλάσματα* in Aristoph., *Aves*, 686; in a fragment of Æschylus, quoted by Liddell and Scott, man is called *πηλόπλαστον σπέρμα*. The idea, Mr. Mackail tells me, is frequent in later Greek poetry. He compares *e.g.* Anth. Pal. x. 45 (*ἐκ πηλοῦ γέγονας κ.τ.λ.*). There is only one simile from the potter in Homer; and the point of comparison is the light swiftness of the motion of the potter’s wheel (*Iliad* XVIII. 600).

alloy. The figure is expanded in Psalm xii. 7: "The sayings of Yahveh are pure from dross—silver well tried (and running) to the ground, seven times refined." (So Cheyne, and compare his Notes.) Then we have the metaphor of God refining by trouble the mingled human character, and purging the State, by his judgments, from the wicked, which are its alloy. Thus, in the Psalms: "Thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver is tried" (lxvi. 10; cf. xvii. 3); and in Zechariah, of the residue yet left after the Judgment: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (xiii. 9). In these passages the persons who are freed from their own dross, and are thus made pure, are one and the same; in others (of which class there are more), the dross represents the wicked who are removed by death. So, in Isaiah's opening chapter: "Thy silver is become dross, thy choice drink thinned with water. . . . But I will smelt out as with lye thy dross, and will take away all thy alloy" (Is. i. 22, 25). The same figure is worked out at some length, both by Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer. vi. 27-30; Ezekiel xxii. 18-22), and the "last of the prophets" repeats it (Mal. iii. 2, 3). With which of these various passages—whether of the first or of the second category—is that verse (xlviii. 10) of the Babylonian Isaiah parallel, to which we owe a now familiar phrase, "the furnace of affliction"? Some (*e.g.*, Ewald and Dillmann) would compare it to Jer. ii. 27-30, in which the prophet laments that the frequent purification of calamity has not separated the metal from the dross; or may we, with Professor Cheyne, assimilate it to the prediction in Zechariah, and translating "Behold I have refined thee, but not *as* silver," interpret the distinction to imply that the Divine furnace of affliction is less severe and more discriminating than the furnace of the human refiner?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in Prov. xvii. 3 the comparison merely means that God, with perfect knowledge, weighs the human heart in the balance of judgment (cf. xvi. 2); xxvii. 21 is obscure.

From metals fashioned into implements of war there are still a few metaphors to be collected.

They are usually employed when dealing with Israel's enemies. The cruel and reviling tongue is naturally comparable to a sword. So in the Psalms: "Their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." "They have whet their tongue, like a sword, and stretched their arrow—a bitter speech" (lvii. 5, lxiv. 4; cf. lix. 8; Prov. xii. 18, v. 3, 4). But II. Isaiah uses the sword differently in the soliloquy of the Servant: "God hath made my mouth as a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; and he made me a polished shaft, in his quiver he covered me" (xlix. 2). This verse leads us on from the sword to the bow. The true bow may be an emblem of strength (Gen. xlix. 24; Hosea i. 5; Jer. xlix. 35; Job xxix. 20), while the bow whose arrow flies aslant is the emblem of deceit (Hosea vii. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 57). God's arrows are the calamities he sends (Deut. xxxii. 23; Job vi. 4), but to a man's arrows may be compared his best support. So the Psalmist: "As arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are sons of (a man's) youth. Happy is the man that has filled his quiver therewith" (cxxvii. 4, 5). The slinger furnishes a metaphor to Jeremiah for violent expulsion and captivity (Jer. x. 18), and a twofold sling metaphor in a prose book is familiar to us all from the spiritualised use of its first half upon every tomb within the "House of Life": "And should a man rise up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul, may the soul of my lord be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; but the souls of thine enemies, them may he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling" (1 Sam. xxv. 29. Prov. xxvii. 17 is obscure).

Most of the biblical metaphors have been included in one or other of the foregoing classes. A few, however, yet remain which are interesting from a religious point of view, and should not, therefore, be passed over. We have already noticed the large number of natural objects to which God, in one or other of his aspects or operations, has been com-

pared. He was likened to beasts of prey, such as the lion and the bear; to birds that carry their young upon their wings, or flutter hovering over the nest; to a stream and to a fountain; to rain and to dew; to destroying fire and to purifying light. In the Psalms, in addition to these, he is also addressed in prayer as a rock, a tower, and a shield.<sup>1</sup> Passing over the ordinary anthropomorphisms of God as warrior and judge, we have found him represented as, or likened to, a father, a mother, and a husband; as a shepherd, with Israel for his flock; as a refiner or as a potter, with Israel for his metal or his clay. A prayer in the book of Jeremiah (xiv. 8, 9) adds to this last by complaining that God, whose intercession and deliverance amid the prevailing trouble had been vainly sought, has become "as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night." It is more usual to speak of God as the host or owner; man as the guest and sojourner. Thus besides the mystic allusions to God's house with which I have dealt elsewhere, we get metaphors such as that in Lev. xxv. 23, where the figure is half real and half metaphorical: "The land is mine, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me." The figurative sense predominates in the fine prayer put into David's mouth by the Chronicler: "We are strangers before thee and sojourners, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no hope" (1 Ch. xxix. 15)—a verse partly borrowed from an earlier Psalm (xxxix. 13).

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Isaiah xxv. 4, 5: "Thou hast been a fortress to the weak, a fortress to the poor in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat. As heat in a parched land, thou subduest the uproar of foreigners; as heat by the shadow of clouds, the song of terrible ones is brought low." 4b is omitted as a gloss; so Dill. Note how God's action is first compared to heat, and then to the shadow which overcomes the heat. Compare Is. xxxii. 2: "A great man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the rain-storm, as rivulets in a parched land, as the shadow of a huge cliff in a thirsty land." The cool protection of the shade is strikingly used in the appeal: "Make as the night thy shadow in the midst of the noon" (Isaiah xvi. 3).



Again, many examples of the transference by metaphor of the physical into the spiritual sphere have already been instanced. Here, in conclusion, may be adduced a few others, which seem to fall outside our categories.

First may be mentioned three metaphors concerning the heart, of which the first two were clearly framed to contrast outward form with inward spirit. Whether Jeremiah, or his contemporary the Deuteronomist, first coined the happy phrase of "circumcising the heart" is a disputed point in criticism. At any rate, this heart-circumcision appears to be the only form of that rite which is countenanced or approved by the law-giver. Joel's bidding is expressed in a metaphor of similar kind, "Rend your heart and not your garments" (ii. 13); while Ezekiel, the supposed "legalist" and man of externals, must be credited with the invention of the metaphorical opposition between the "heart of stone" and the "heart of flesh" (xi. 19; xxxvi. 26).

Another interesting set of spiritual metaphors is the transference of bodily infirmities to the religious sphere. Thus sickness is a type of sin, and, as sin and affliction are closely co-ordinated, it is also a type of calamity. Already in Hosea it is found as a figure for the "corruption of the body politic" (v. 13, see Cheyne; vi. 1). Isaiah, in a splendid personification of the State, works out the metaphor more fully. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no sound part in it; wounds and wales and festering sores—not pressed, and not bound up, and not softened with oil."<sup>1</sup> Wounds and breaches (here the figure is from a wall) are frequent metaphors for calamities in Jeremiah. For in his day the breach was incurable, and the wound desperate. No medicine or plaster could heal

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah i. 5, 6. So Cheyne, except that with Dillmann I have substituted, "the whole head" for "every head." Cp. metaphors with *πᾶσι* in Greek.

them, no Gilead balm or physician effect a cure.<sup>1</sup> In the Psalms sickness is more directly associated with sin. Calamity and iniquity are co-ordinated in the distich :

“There is no soundness in my flesh for thy fervent ire ; no health in my bones because of my sin.”<sup>2</sup> with which one might compare the double use of the word in Isaiah liii., in which the sinless Servant is described “as a man of pains, and familiar with sickness,” whereas he it was who “bore our sicknesses and carried our pains” (liii. 3, 4).

More specifically we frequently find the infirmities of eye and ear transferred to the lack of comprehension and knowledge of spiritual truth. To close the eyes is to shut the capacity of spiritual discernment. Thus Isaiah is bidden : “Make the heart of this people fat, and its ears heavy, and its eyes besmear, lest it should see with its eyes and hear with its ears, and its heart should understand, and it should be converted and be healed” (vi. 10 ; and cf. xliv. 18 ; for the fat heart cf. Ps. xvii. 10 ; cxix. 70). And the same figure recurs as an amazing passage in a later chapter, which is itself a perfect forest of metaphors :—

Astonish yourselves, and be astonished ; blind yourselves, and be blind ! They are drunken, but not with wine ; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For Yahveh hath poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes which see, and your heads hath he covered, so that the vision throughout is become unto you as the words of a sealed book, which if one delivers to a man that is book-learned, saying, Pray read this, he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed ; and should the book be delivered to one that is not book-learned, saying, Pray read this, he saith, I am not book-learned.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jer. viii. 21, 22, x. 19, xiv. 17, xv. 18, xxx. 12, 17, xxxiii. 6 ; cf. Nahum iii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxxviii. 4, 6 ; cf. vi. 3, xxxi. 11, xxxii. 3, xli. 4.

<sup>3</sup> A striking simile from a scroll is that in Isaiah xxxiv. 4, “The heavens shall roll up as a scroll, and all their host shall fade, as foliage fades from the vine, and as fading leaves from the fig-tree.” Cf. Steinthal *Zu Bibel und Religionsphilosophie*, p. 46, “*Poetisch gewaltiger wirkt die dritte Form, wenn das Bild das Kleine bietet, an welchem gemessen die Sache ihre Grösse offenbart.....Diese Form dürfte in der Bibel die häufigste sein.*” The Greek Rhetoricians would hardly have approved of this method.

Yet in the time to come, "a very little while," "the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see" (xxix. 9-12, 18; cf. xxxii. 3, 4). In the great list of curses in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy analogous metaphors are employed: "Yahveh shall smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart, and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways" (xxviii. 28, 29; cf. Is. lix. 10). The Babylonian Isaiah (and his disciples?) is especially fond of this metaphor, and he associates it with others, such as those of the dungeon and of thirst, which all express the same line of thought, though occasionally, as in the case of the dungeon, a more literal reference may be also possibly combined. I need here do no more than allude to the famous contrast of the Janus-faced Servant in the forty-second chapter, who in his higher aspect so spiritually keen and tender "that he will not break the crushed reed nor quench the dimly-burning wick," and destined "to open blind eyes, to bring out captives from the prison, and those who sit in darkness from the house of restraint," is in his lower aspect himself among the deaf deafest and blindest among the blind.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of self-purification or of Divine forgiveness lent itself naturally to metaphor. For inward sin is described as outward impurity. Man is either bidden to wash him of his sin and be clean, or he bids God to do it for him (Isaiah i. 16; Ps. li. 4, 9). It is only through judgment that God can wash away the filth of the daughters of Jerusalem (Isaiah iv. 4); and at a later period the wickedness of Judah was such that, "though thou wash thee with natron and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is in-

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xlii. 3, 7, 18-20; cf., too, xliii. 8. For the figure of the reed see Cheyne, and cf. xxxvi. 6; Ez. xxix. 6-7, where it is used as a figure of the outward weakness of Egypt. In Ps. xxxviii. 14, deafness and dumbness are emblems of humility; cf. Is. liii. 7. In Isaiah xxxiv., xxxv., many images of the great Second Isaiah are imitated and exaggerated. See Dillmann.

grained before me, said the Lord God" (Jer. ii. 22). Yet God can work the miracle: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness will I cleanse you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; cf. Ps. xxvi. 6, lxxiii. 13). The ordinary words for forgiveness are palpably metaphorical, the idea in each case being that the sin is removed by being covered up or wiped out from the sight and memory of God. Unforgiveable sin is "written before God with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond" (Jer. xvii. 1; cf. Job xix. 24), or it is carefully tied up as in a bag, and laid up in store among God's treasures (Job xiv. 17; Hosea xiii. 12; Deut. xxxii. 34). But what men pray for is that God will subdue their iniquities, and cast the burden of them "into the depths of the sea"<sup>1</sup> (Micah vii. 19).

It would be interesting, did space allow, to consider how far certain originally material conceptions in the earlier Hebrew religion were spiritualised by later teachers. How far, for example, did the idea of God's glory free itself from material associations, and become, as God's face became, purely metaphorical? And, again, it would be interesting to discuss whether the contrary process has ever taken place, and whether within the Bible itself or in the post-Biblical period metaphors have been misunderstood and hardened into rites. A prominent instance lies immediately to hand (cf. Exodus xiii. 9-16; Deut. vi. 8, 9, xi. 18; Prov. iii. 3, vi. 21, vii. 3). And these inquiries might lead on to a more general one: how far symbol and metaphor must be always a constituent feature of religious teaching; and what, in such a case, should be their limits and their function. But these great questions are beyond the scope of an index, and beyond the powers of an index-maker.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

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<sup>1</sup> I have been compelled from lack of space to omit all Biblical personifications.